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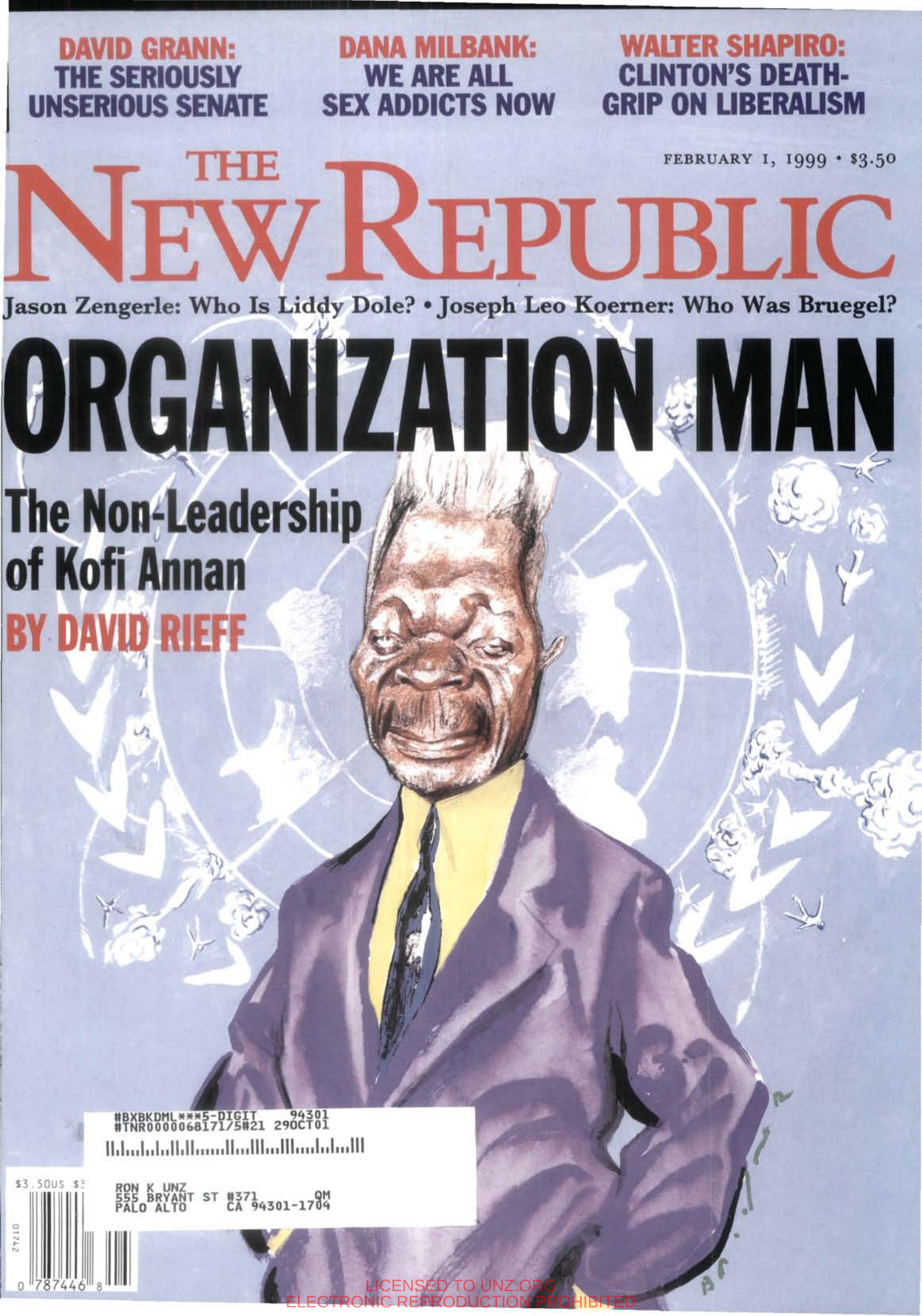

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CORRESPONDENCE

Doubtful evidence

To the editors:

Charles Lane summarizes Jeffrey Rosen's testimony that defendants were not required to take an oath until Reconstruction and that perjury would therefore never constitute "high crimes and misdemeanors" in the eyes of the Founding Fathers ("Unimpeachable," December 21, 1998).

Actually, the history of the law pertaining to witnesses makes the point even stronger. From the mid-1600s to the mid-1800s, the parties to civil litigation were flat-out barred from testifying. The basis for this blanket exclusion is explained in *Evidence in Trials at Common Law* by John Henry Wigmore: "The theory of disqualification by interest was merely one variety of the general theory which underlay the extensive rules of incompetency at common law. [The premises for those rules] were accepted in the 1700s as axioms of truth: Total exclusion from the stand is the proper safeguard against a false decision, whenever the persons offered are of a class specially likely to speak falsely"—and chief among such persons were the parties to the litigation.

In the legal world of the Framers, the question now being answered by Congress could not have been asked.

MICHAEL J. SAKS
University of Iowa College of Law
Iowa City, Iowa

To the editors:

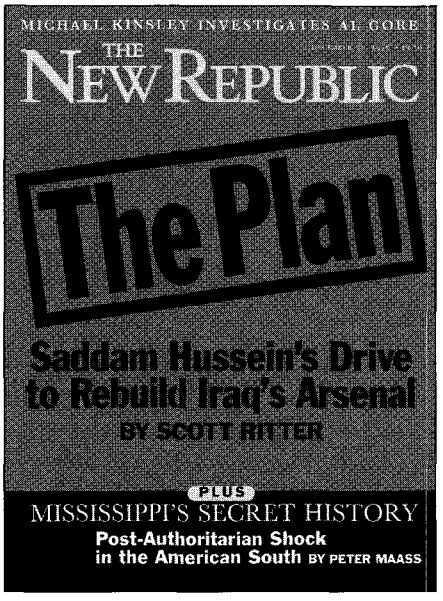
I find the TRB column of December 21, 1998, unpersuasive. You state that testimony under oath was not required in the 1700s and therefore could not qualify as an impeachable offense today. But slavery was legal in the 1700s, and many now-lawful sexual practices were illegal. Our views concerning human conduct and interactions, and the laws governing them, have changed immensely over time. The purpose and intent of the impeachment provision therefore must have been to give the Senate the power, by a two-thirds vote, to remove a president who violates current criminal law.

PAUL T. SHOEMAKER
Bronxville, New York

Liberalism and its critic

To the editors:

Paul Berman begins his intriguing essay on the radical left thinker Cornelius Castoriadis by briefly recounting the anarchist protest literature about Soviet despotism ("Waiting for the Barbarians," December 21, 1998). Oddly, he fails to mention one of the earliest and most eloquent landmarks of that literature, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, written in 1922 by the great anarchist-feminist-revolutionist Emma Goldman. Despite her longstanding critique of Marxism as indifferent to individual liberty, when she was stripped of her U.S. citizenship and deported in the Red Scare of 1919 to her native Russia as J. Edgar Hoover's first political deportee from the United States (talk about indifference to liberty!), she welcomed the chance to join the Russian revolution of her dreams. But, though she was enthusiastically embraced by Lenin himself and given work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Post-Authoritarian Shock in the American South BY PETER MAASS

of her own choosing, from the start of her two-year sojourn in Russia she was increasingly horrified by the excesses and suffering she witnessed. She loved the people's revolution and hated the Bolshevik state. Even at the price of permanent exile and ostracism by both left and right, she left Russia to write her heartrending report. Perhaps, as Berman intimates, the time is ripe for renewed study of anarchist ideas. Emma Goldman's would be an excellent place to begin.

ALIX KATES SHULMAN
New York, New York

Boomtown

To the editors:

Jonathan Chait ridicules *The Wall Street Journal* for predicting an "economic Armageddon" ("Unqualified Opinions," December 21, 1998). I researched our editorials on the Clinton 1993 tax proposals and found the following prediction, published on August 9, 1993, upon the passage of the tax bill:

> Of course, the Clinton Boom could still save the day. We've said all along that while the Clinton budget deal resembles the George Bush budget deal, the economy isn't nearly as weak now as it was in 1990. Real estate markets have stabilized or risen in most of the country, corporate and household balance sheets have improved and banks have begun to lend once again. The enormous productivity gains in recent years have helped corporate bottom lines if not job creation, and the Republican Federal Reserve has warned it won't stand for a repeat of 1970s-style inflation.
>
> So maybe low interest rates and the natural momentum of the economy will offset the disincentives and retroactive taxes that the Democrats have just installed. And maybe small businesses will ignore their new 44 percent top marginal tax rate, plus the levies to come to pay for universal heath care, and start hiring workers again. If it doesn't happen, there'll be no doubt about where the responsibility lies.

ROBERT L. BARTLEY
Editor
The Wall Street Journal
New York, New York

Jonathan Chait replies:

Is there some other *Wall Street Journal* editorial page that I don't know about? Otherwise, I can't see how Bartley could possibly deny having predicted in 1993 that Clinton's tax hike would bring disaster. That year the *Journal* ran a series of editorials called "THE CLASS WARFARE ECONOMY," complete with pictures of guillotines, and Bartley himself wrote that "the Clinton proposals will not boost the economy but cripple it." That Bartley has since dug up one editorial qualifying that prediction does not make his paper's other, unqualified predictions disappear.

Part-time profs

To the editors:

Although John N. Hickman's piece on adjunct professors touched on several important issues, the touch was sometimes less than compelling ("Adjunct U.," December 7, 1998). He asserted that adjuncts "are frequently better teachers" than full-time professors and

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that "students on average are no more or less satisfied with adjunct professors than they are with full-time, permanent ones." How then does he know that adjuncts are "frequently" better teachers?

Hickman is right, I think, that decreasing budgets are a cause of the growth of part-time instruction. But there is another, more insidious cause: New, corporate-style university managers see a permanent, independent faculty as a hindrance to turning the university into a degree-and-certificate mill, modeled on a commercial business. With an "outsourced" workforce of part-timers—underpaid, overworked, easily intimidated, easily fired—the new university CEOs, untrammeled, can do their misguided worst. The big losers in all this, of course, are their "customers"—the students.

FRANK D. GILLIARD
California State University
Hayward, California

Gray area

To the editors:
Peter Schrag may believe that Gray Davis, the new California governor, is a Clinton clone, but Davis differs from Clinton in one important aspect ("Gray Matters," December 21, 1998). Unlike Jerry Brown or Pete Wilson, Davis will not risk his credibility by running too soon for the presidency. However, should he seek higher office, the new governor might do surprisingly well in territory normally considered hostile for Democrats. After all, the Deep South has been waiting more than 130 years for the return of President Davis.

MICHAEL D. ROSEN
Long Beach, California

Hung jury

To the editors:
There was an important error in your otherwise fine editorial "Latin Lesson" (December 14, 1998). The late Justice Lewis Powell was not "[w]riting for the court" in his *Bakke* opinion. In fact, no other Supreme Court justice joined Powell's discussion of the "diversity rationale" for affirmative action in higher education.

Your editorial was right to point out that the diversity rationale is weak as a matter of logic and common sense. And its dubious legal pedigree doesn't strengthen it.

ROGER CLEGG
General Counsel
Center for Equal Opportunity
Washington, D.C.

Dashed rep

To the editors:
Sam Dash's reputation may be diminished in the eyes of Jeffrey Rosen ("Starr Crossed," December 14, 1998), but not in the eyes of those who have admired his commitment to the rule of law over politics as chief counsel to Sam Ervin's Watergate Committee and during his independent investigation soon after the British massacres on "bloody Sunday."

Fortunately, Sam Dash has understood the imperfections and vulnerabilities of presidential systems and the need for reform, not the abolition, of independent counsels.

HENRY F. CAREY
Atlanta, Georgia

Snake oil

To the editors:
The tax on fuel that you support in your December 21, 1998, editorial is regressive ("Gas Up"). This tax would add a burden to middle America and to the highway transportation industry.

ROBERT STRAIGHT
Lexington, Kentucky

The credit crunch of 1998 didn't put the squeeze on America's home buyers. In fact, families that bought a home or refinanced a mortgage last year probably didn't even realize there was one. But major corporations, foreign governments, and billion-dollar hedge funds sure felt the pinch. They found financing hard to come by. And when it was available, they often had to pay a premium for the privilege.

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FROM WASHINGTON

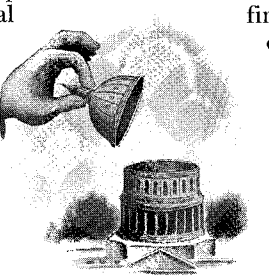
Cashed out

President Clinton has finally settled the Paula Jones case by shipping the plaintiff's lawyers a total of $850,000, $375,000 of which Bill and Hillary took out of their own personal savings. If *The Washington Post* is to be believed, the First Couple probably has around $1.5 million in assets—plenty by normal standards but considerably less than what either of Clinton's two predecessors, George Bush and Ronald Reagan, was worth. So, in addition to all the other problems the Jones case has caused the First Family, it also represents a major financial hit. All of this is not to mention the legal bills that the Clintons are still running up; to date, their legal defense funds and insurance companies have paid $3.5 million to attorneys, but the eventual cost, according to the *Post*, could hit $10 million.

This is not a reason to pity the Clintons, especially Bill. The possibility of being forced into a disadvantageous settlement in the Jones case, or of incurring the cost of defending himself against impeachment and indictment, are just two of the many untoward consequences that he apparently didn't consider on that fateful day when Monica Lewinsky ambled by, flapping her thong underwear in the breeze. But the fact that the president is spending a huge amount of his own money to settle this civil case does highlight yet another reason why the country should rue *Clinton* v. *Jones*, the Supreme Court decision that permits private lawsuits against incumbent presidents.

Article II, section 1, clause 7 of the Constitution says that "The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be encreased [sic] nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them." The obvious intent of this wise provision was to prevent Congress or the states from committing legislative extortion against the president. But, read more broadly, it embodies the Founding Fathers' sensible view that the efficacy and legitimacy of the chief executive depend in part on his being as free as possible from *any* financial pressures that might warp, or even appear to warp, the decisions he makes on behalf of the country.

A defendant president faces certain costs in any lawsuit, no matter what the outcome. Settlements are expensive; judgments for the plaintiff, worse. And even a successful defendant must still pay his lawyers unless he wants to countersue for attorney fees—a difficult and often futile endeavor. No matter how you slice it, then, civil litigation against an incumbent president threatens his personal financial condition. And this very clearly violates the spirit, if not the letter, of Article II, section 1, clause 7.



To be sure, neither the justices nor the lawyers in *Clinton* v. *Jones* paid this issue much attention. The heart of the president's case was that lawsuits would take up too much of his time or create impossible dilemmas in cases where the president's best defense would require him to discuss classified information. Writing for the High Court, Justice John Paul Stevens breezily noted that there had hardly been any lawsuits against past presidents and expressed blithe confidence in the federal courts to keep cases against the president from getting too time-consuming—and that was pretty much that. Even Justice Stephen Breyer, whose separate concurring opinion presciently noted that the Court was probably underestimating the potential for burdensome or spurious lawsuits in today's litigation-rich environment, did not explore the moral hazards created by exposing a sitting president to potentially crippling—and, hence, potentially corrupting—financial risk.

Yet *Clinton* v. *Jones* has proven that those risks are very real indeed. A sitting president has been forced to spend the last several years cadging (through intermediaries) for donations to help pay for his legal defense. Even though there is no evidence that this has actually corrupted him, it has created a reasonable inference that, as president, he'll be more attuned to the interests of the people who have helped bail him out (Hollywood fat cats, largely) than he will be to the interests of the public at large. Clinton's camp itself is aware of this problem. At one point, his confidants actually considered asking for a loan from wealthy friends to help pay for the Jones settlement, but concluded, correctly, that it wouldn't look right.

In other words, even if Monica Lewinsky had never existed, and the Paula Jones case was a personal-injury matter rather than a steamy sexual harassment case, the legitimacy of this (or any other) presidency would have been threatened merely by having to fight expensive litigation. Moreover, it's probable that a president's defense will usually be much *more* expensive than that of an ordinary civil defendant. For one thing, as the Jones case proved, a would-be plaintiff against the president can turn to the chief executive's wealthy political opponents for financing, thus removing one of the normal limitations that usually keeps marginal plaintiffs out of court in the first place. In addition, whereas an ordinary defendant might consider settling a case to save lawyers' fees even though he's done nothing wrong, a similarly innocent president might be forced to litigate, because politics would prevent him from even seeming to admit any wrongdoing. Also, someone who sues a president might be more likely to eschew settlement—if only because longer trials mean more minutes on TV, which mean fatter book contracts.

Ordinary citizens, of course, can buy liability insurance to protect themselves from impoverishment-by-lawsuit. The Clintons, for example, already had some such coverage. (It covers only part of the case costs.) But in a post-*Jones* world, the cost and difficulty of getting personal-liability insurance for a president will go up, which, given the very real risk of a suit, is tantamount to imposing a special financial disadvantage on anyone who holds the office. More to the point, do we really want the president of the United States engaging in complex negotiations affecting his personal interests with giant insurance firms that have a stake in federal policy?

If *Clinton* v. *Jones* stands for anything, it is the proposition that no one, not even the president, is above the law. Indeed, the Supreme Court was so determined to enshrine this cliché that it seems not to have noticed that it was increasing the danger that all future presidents, including those of much sounder character than Bill Clinton, could be made to corrupt themselves against their will.

CHARLES LANE

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 1, 1999

DEFENSE LESS

Republicans cannot seem to decide exactly why President Clinton should be removed from office. First, they said it was not Clinton's adultery that disqualified him from high office—it was his perjury, during the Paula Jones case and before Ken Starr's grand jury, that warranted his impeachment by the House and conviction by the Senate. Yet, once Clinton took these charges at face value and made an argument for why his actions did not meet the technical definition of perjury, his accusers pounced on him for invoking hairsplitting legalisms—and called for his ouster on the grounds that he had defiled the presidency with his moral crimes.

Clinton could not win this game in the House, and it's not clear he can win it in the Senate, either. The dilemma lies in the fact that the president stands accused of both moral and legal offenses. If he focuses on the technical question of perjury, he risks ignoring the ethical implications of his sorry behavior. If he confesses to lying, then he imperils himself legally—if not now, then in a case that could be brought against him after he finishes his term as president. Of course, ordinary citizens, who need not worry about public approval or leadership by example, do not have this problem. They can mount legalistic defenses with impunity or just keep mum. The president of the United States cannot, which explains why he felt compelled to walk into Ken Starr's grand jury perjury trap when most citizens would have taken the Fifth.

Clinton's lawyers would do well to take this dilemma very, very seriously, as they plot their next moves. Indeed, we would all be better off if they could convince their client that the best defense strategy for a Senate trial is no defense at all—or almost none. They should resist the temptation to match the anticipated 24-hour talkathon by the House managers hour for hour; a brief opening statement will suffice, one that explains why the president's conduct, even assuming everything happened as Ken Starr says it did, does not rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors." Once that's done, they should call no witnesses of their own—and perhaps resist the temptation to cross-examine the likes of Monica Lewinsky and Vernon Jordan if the House managers call them. Instead, they should rest on the extensive point-by-point rebuttal of the charges they've already submitted in writing, make themselves available to senators for questioning, and then, in their concluding arguments, reiterate a simple point: the president's alleged misconduct does not rise to the constitutional threshold for removal.

This strategy goes against every instinct in the litigious bones of the first lady, the White House counsel, and the president's private attorneys from the take-no-prisoners firm of Williams & Connolly. But it would have several benefits. First, it would concentrate the senators' attention on the heart of the matter, which is not the president's misdeeds but their significance. In our view, his conduct is reprehensible—disgusting, in fact—but not grounds for his removal from office. This is the overarching truth of the impeachment mess, and delving into a point-by-point rebuttal of what is bound to be a windy House prosecution argument could only divert attention from it. Indeed, an extended defense would lengthen the trial, increasing the risk that some new accusation or legal blunder could poison the atmosphere against Clinton.

Just think how much better off the president would have been if he had simply declined to contest the Paula Jones case! Fact is, a minimalist strategy works for defendants all the time. Just ask former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. Brought to trial on dubious charges by an obsessed independent counsel, he simply let the prosecutor's own bungling speak for itself; the jury acquitted after the briefest of deliberations. And unlike Espy, who could not be certain of the jury's sentiments ahead of time, Clinton knows that the Senate's current predisposition and partisan composition mean it is unlikely to muster a two-thirds majority for conviction. The shorter the trial, the less likely that is to change. Abstaining from a defense may be not only Clinton's most dignified option; it could also be his safest.

To be sure, what's good for Clinton's defense is not necessarily what's good for the country. But, as it happens, a no-defense strategy would serve the public's interests, too. Not only would it help bring these proceedings to a swift conclusion, but it would also allow the Senate to retain Clinton as the nation's president without implicitly accepting his excuses or blunting the impact of a subsequent congressional censure. This is not, of course, precisely what the president wants out of the impeachment process. But it's what he deserves. •

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NOTEBOOK

LOWERING THE BARR: If there's one thing President Clinton's nemesis Bob Barr believes in, it's the importance of telling the truth about sex under oath. Now we know, thanks to court papers uncovered by Larry Flynt—where, one wonders, have the Atlanta newspapers been for the past year?—that, during sworn proceedings in his second of two divorces, Barr was asked if he had been faithful to the particular wife he was splitting up with on that particular day. Barr refused to answer. Barr's lawyer explained any reply could bring "public disgrace and infamy" upon the family. Pro-impeachment Republicans assert that Barr's actions mark him as a man of honor—that refusing to say whether you have been faithful to your wife is incredibly different from trying to dodge the question, as Clinton did. CBS Radio commentator Dave Ross even says Barr's noble silence makes him a "role model" for children. Of course, if Barr had been faithful to his second wife, no disgrace could have resulted from answering the question, so it's pretty obvious what his nonresponse meant. And it's bizarre that anyone could then conclude that this performance makes him a role model—let alone appoint him as an impeachment manager, free to stand in the well of the Senate and lecture the nation about morality. But Barr's tactic in his divorce case does raise the question of why Clinton didn't try something similar in his Paula Jones deposition. In most kinds of civil depositions, when a person refuses to answer, the judge may stipulate that it can be assumed that any answer, if given, would have helped the other side's case. This is the risk Clinton would have run by not replying to the questions about Monica. But it was a very slight risk, as it turns out, given that the presiding judge in the Jones case ultimately ruled all testimony about Monica to be immaterial. That Clinton tried to bob and weave instead suggests that he never told his lawyer, Bob Bennett, the truth before the deposition began. Otherwise, it's inconceivable Bennett would not have advised Clinton to hold his tongue. Further evidence, alas, of how central such prevarication is to the president's character.

CONGO LINE: Unlike London's *Financial Times*, which provides consistent, intelligent Africa coverage that lets a reader follow a story as it unfolds, *The New York Times* tends to compensate for its lack of sustained reporting with flourishes of big-think. On January 12, the big thinking was done by two newcomers to the continent, Ian Fisher and Norimitsu Onishi. Their front-page story, "CONGO'S STRUGGLE MAY UNLEASH BROAD STRIFE TO REDRAW AFRICA," offers no evidence—none—that Congo's example has prompted secession movements or invasions in other parts of the continent. Still, the authors suggest that the "national boundary lines that have defined African countries for a century and lent some stability may slowly come apart." What's the basis for this massive claim? Six countries have troops in Congo, while border incursions have historically been "largely absent." Well, not that absent—given Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia in 1978, Tanzania's invasion of Uganda in 1979, Libya's invasions of Chad in 1980 and 1983, and South Africa's fighting in Angola starting in 1975. The guiding principle of African politics was not—as Fisher and Onishi suggest—that countries don't invade one another, but that, when they do, it is to change governments rather than borders (Somalia's effort to seize the Ogaden region from Ethiopia being an exception that proves the rule). And that is exactly what the combatants are doing in Congo. None of them has tried to annex territory, and few Congolese have shown any desire to secede. Next time, maybe the *Times* should check the *FT* first.

BLAME GAME: Saddam Hussein loves to bemoan the effect of U.N. sanctions on his people. But a recent article in *The New York Times* reveals the propagandistic nature of Saddam's concern. According to the *Times*, U.N. diplomats charged with monitoring the oil-for-food program first instituted in 1996 say Saddam has actually failed to buy much of the food and medicine allowed to him. Since last fall, the U.N. has approved almost $25 million for high-protein biscuits, plus fortified milk for children under five and nursing mothers. But Iraqi authorities have yet to place a single order for the items. Nor have they bought any of the drugs for treating childhood leukemia for which they've been given the go-ahead. And Iraq has recently begun refusing offers of relief goods from Arab nations. It is not sanctions, but Saddam himself, who is responsible for Iraqi suffering. And, of course, there wouldn't be any sanctions at all if the Iraqi dictator would simply give up his weapons of mass destruction as he agreed to do seven years ago.

MAN OF THE WORLD: "No presidential candidate should be taken seriously unless he or she understands the importance of foreign policy," Dan Quayle really told the Heritage Foundation on January 12. We couldn't agree more—and no one illustrates the point better than Quayle himself. In 1989, as George Bush's occasional emissary, Quayle compiled a remarkable record, which included his stirring oration to the people of Samoa ("You all look like happy campers to me. Happy campers you are.... And as far as I'm concerned happy campers you will always be.") as well as his pledge to El Salvador that the United States would "work toward the elimination of human rights." And then there was this geostrategic insight: "Hawaii has always been a very pivotal role in the Pacific. It is *in* the Pacific. It is a part of the United States that is an island that is right here." "Experience helps," Quayle told the Associated Press after his appearance at Heritage. "I don't need on-the-job training." And he definitely shouldn't get the opportunity for any more. •

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Elizabeth Dole, charismatic careerist.

LIDDY LITE

By Jason Zengerle

At a time when Washington is paralyzed by scandal and gridlock, politicos seem to have reached consensus on at least one matter: Elizabeth Dole is the antidote to what ails the body politic. "She may be the only person who lives in Washington that is not part of Washington's mess," gushed *Hotline* founder Doug Bailey shortly after Dole announced her resignation as president of the American Red Cross, a move that presumably clears the way for a presidential candidacy. "She would be a formidable person in this contest," said Gary Bauer, the conservative activist who might mount a bid of his own in 2000. "History is going to be made," predicted GOP pollster Linda Divall.

And the excitement isn't confined to political professionals in Washington. In North Carolina, 15-year-old twins Justin and Michelle Leonard from Dole's hometown, Salisbury, are currently staging a Forrest Gump-like run across the state to drum up support for a Dole candidacy. In a *Time*/CNN poll conducted in the days following her resignation from the Red Cross, Dole placed a strong second in the Republican field behind George W. Bush.

Is there any substance behind the Liddy Dole boom? Supporters claim her ideological consistency makes her a compelling candidate. "She is a conservative," declares Mari Maseng Will, the wife of George Will and a political consultant who will likely play a major role in any Dole campaign. "She is a faith-based conservative." Perhaps, but that represents the conclusion of a long ideological evolution. In fact, Dole got her start in government as a freshly minted Harvard Law School graduate at Lyndon Johnson's Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Her task in the Great Society was to promote special education. Later, Dole worked in LBJ's Office of Consumer Affairs.

Dole had her conservative epiphany just as Richard Nixon came into office in 1969. While her Great Society colleagues fled, she stayed put. She didn't even change jobs. Dropping the strident pro-consumer stands she had taken under Johnson, she switched from a registered Democrat to an Independent. Dole didn't become a Republican until shortly before her 1975 marriage to her husband Bob—a smart move considering that Gerald Ford tapped the Kansas senator as his vice presidential candidate eight months after the two were wed.

This is not to say that Dole abandoned all of her prior beliefs, merely that her ideological consistency has been a bit—well—inconsistent. Consider her tenure as Ronald Reagan's assistant for public liaison, during which she frequently voiced her own support for the Equal Rights Amendment—even as she was defending her boss's opposition to it. "I'm convinced he does believe in equal rights for women," she assured *The New York Times*, before adding, "I have been a supporter of the ERA."

So, if it's not Dole's ideology that makes her a good candidate, perhaps it's her professional accomplishments. Certainly, that's what Earl Cox thinks. Cox, a Republican activist who for the past 15 months has been trudging around New Hampshire and Iowa on behalf of his "Draft Elizabeth Dole 2000" movement (just as he worked to draft Colin Powell four years ago), believes that Dole's more than qualified for the job of president. "She was the first woman secretary of transportation," Cox says with evident pride. "She worked for George Bush as his secretary of labor. She spent nine years as the head of the American Red Cross.... She has the tools to take us into the twenty-first century!"

Granted, it's an impressive job history. But, as any employer knows, it's not how many jobs you've had, but what you did with them, that counts. And while there are no major black marks on her record—"When closets are opened," Cox boasts, "no skeletons are going to jump out"—there's also not a lot to distinguish her from dozens of other former Cabinet secretaries.

Dole's four-and-a-half-year tenure as Reagan's transportation secretary—a Cabinet post that is decidedly second-tier—was characterized more by her politicking than her attentiveness to transportation issues. Yes, she was a valuable political asset to Reagan: in 1984, she served as his counterpoint to Democratic vice presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro, logging some 43,000 miles on visits to 26 states during the president's reelection campaign. But Secretary Dole nearly botched the government's sale of Conrail when she insisted on selling the railroad to a single purchaser instead of through a public stock offering. (She grudgingly accepted the latter approach, and the government netted more than $1.6 billion.)

Dole's greatest challenge at Transportation involved her supervision of the Federal Aviation Administration. Taking over the department in the aftermath of the 1981 PATCO strike—during which Reagan fired 11,400 striking air-traffic controllers—Dole did the administration's bidding when it came to overseeing the FAA. She heeded the administration's wish to boost air traffic back to its pre-strike levels, all the while toeing the administration line that there was no need to hire back the fired controllers. By 1987, the air-traffic control system was seriously overburdened, and airplane near-misses had risen to roughly two per day. (Indeed, Dole herself almost became a victim of the lingering confusion that year when a private jet she was on nearly collided with a Cessna over New Orleans.)

Dole's stint as labor secretary under President Bush was too short—a mere 22 months—for her to do much of anything other than to impress labor leaders with, as

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The Washington Post noted upon her departure, her "warmth and accessibility." Dole's tenure atop the American Red Cross left a more lasting impression, cementing her image as a crusading do-gooder. But, in getting the foundering organization back on its feet, she ushered in changes some saw as anathema to its charitable mission.

To shore up the organization's finances, Dole hit up some of the very same tobacco companies and agribusiness concerns that had contributed to her husband's political campaigns. When, even after these efforts, the organization posted a record financial loss, Dole cut 1,000 jobs and instituted an aggressive scheme to help the Red Cross secure a bigger share of the lucrative blood market. Traditionally, the Red Cross—along with other blood banks—had collected blood from volunteer donors and then had sold it to nearby hospitals, turning a small profit. But, under Dole, the Red Cross actually began to traffic in blood as a commodity, collecting it in low-cost markets where supply was high and then transporting it for sale in high-priced areas where supply was low. The move raised revenues, but it didn't endear the organization to other blood banks around the country—and left some wondering if the organization had become just another business.

Obviously, much of the hoopla surrounding Elizabeth Dole is a function of her gender. Dole's personal history doesn't exactly fit the conservative stereotype of a woman, but that hasn't stopped Republicans from plugging her into their mold. Indeed, Dole's supporters try to portray her as a woman who has struck a perfect balance between a family and a career—a Republican counterpoint to the Democrats' Hillary. Thus, the woman who didn't marry until she was 39 and has no children is just a traditional Southern girl. The woman who has lived in her husband's four-room Watergate bachelor pad for more than 20 years is a happy homemaker. And the woman who occasionally joins her husband for a meal of Lean Cuisine in front of the television is a doting wife.

Indeed, Dole has been a doting wife, at least in the sense that she has been tireless in her efforts to advance her husband's political career. Before she stepped down from the Red Cross for her own apparent run, she had quit or taken a leave from her job on four occasions to campaign for her husband. In fact, much of the current excitement about a potential Dole candidacy stems from the fond memories of the effective campaigning she did for her husband during his 1996 presidential run.

While Bob Dole was never quite able to connect with the public, Elizabeth's Oprah-style campaign appearances—in which she would step out from behind the podium and roam the audience with a wireless microphone—were a hit. But even these gestures of warmth and seeming spontaneity were incredibly scripted affairs, repeated in lockstep precision day after day. As Dole herself once confessed to *Newsweek*, her jokes take "three or four weeks" to prepare. Not quite as long as devising a plan for a big-government universal health insurance program, but also no less calculated. •

A numbers racket for the census.

SAMPLE ERROR

By Lawrence Osborne

By most accounts, the debate over mathematical sampling and the 2000 census is a straightforward matter with little moral ambiguity. On one side are the statisticians and the experts. Appealing to simple logic and reason, they argue that sampling could do a better job of counting the millions of Americans whom the census now routinely misses. On the other side are the Republicans, who are primarily concerned about their immediate partisan needs: Because most of the undercounted are poor, they fear, sampling will tilt the U.S. Congress toward the left by changing the way seats are apportioned.

For most educated people, this is a no-brainer. It's the cosmopolitans versus the Luddites; mathematical reality versus scientific ignorance; liberal truth versus conservative partisanship. But, while sampling opponents may indeed be acting out of political self-interest, it is not true that you have to be a Republican—or, for that matter, a Luddite—to wonder whether sampling is all it's cracked up to be. Indeed, for all of their partisan character, the questions about sampling are very legitimate and deserve serious attention if it becomes a live issue this year, as seems likely.

Let's begin with the case for sampling. The pro-sampling forces argue that the 1990 census essentially left out about four million people—about 1.6 percent of the population—and that minorities constitute a disproportionate percentage of that total. This is important, they say, because both congressional apportionment and federal appropriations are based on census figures.

To remedy the problem, they would have the Census Bureau adopt a new procedure for counting the population. First, the bureau would mail out forms to households, as it does now; if the past is indicative, such a straightforward survey with some immediate follow-ups should successfully count about 90 percent of the population.

But, from there, the bureau would break with its past behavior. Instead of sending even more interviewers to find the people missed in the early rounds, it would extrapolate from the information gleaned from the initial 90 percent to generate an estimate of the remaining ten percent. It would then select 750,000 households at random, compare those results to the results from the general survey, and make adjustments as needed.

If, for example, the bureau found that the initial enumeration had undercounted Hispanics in a suburb of

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Miami, it would revise upward its count of Hispanics nationwide. This solution, sampling proponents say, would be both fairer, since it would be better than simply giving up on those whom it could not count personally, and cheaper, since it would involve fewer follow-up interviews and thus fewer interviewers.

Republicans protest that this would represent the first-ever radical change in census procedures and that it violates the Constitution's explicit provision for an "actual enumeration" of the population; the Framers, they say, were savvy to hocus-pocus like sampling and gave it short shrift. In response, the advocates of sampling point to the fact that the use of mail-in forms is a relatively recent innovation and surely represented more of a break with the past than sampling. In addition, they say, since no census represents an "actual enumeration" of the whole population anyway—after all, millions of people get left out, and the door-to-door census-takers base their reports on what people tell them, which is hardly reliable—it makes perfect sense to use sampling to calibrate the count.

Sampling advocates also note that it is used almost routinely in 1,000 different contexts, from political polling to the minor operations that go on in doctors' surgeries every minute of the day. When your doctor takes a sample of your blood, for example, he is making a statistical judgment—and a perfectly justified one—that the remaining 99.999 percent of the blood in your veins bears some precise relation to the drops in the bottom of his vial.

"Without sampling," says Kenneth Prewitt, director of the Census Bureau, "there would be no statistical method at all." Although the bureau has been criticized for relying on sampling, Prewitt says, "It's really not healthy for the body politic to call the bureau's career professionals into question. To question the scientific basis of sampling itself is unwise."

But there may indeed be good reasons to question the judgment of the bureau's career professionals—or, at least, their judgment on this issue. In the wake of the 1990 census, the bureau conducted a sampling survey called the post-enumeration survey (PES) to compare the results from traditional enumeration and sampling. Naturally, there was a discrepancy. But that only begged the question: Which assessment was right? To answer that question, consider two separate reports—the report by the Committee on Adjustment of Postcensal Estimates (CAPE) of 1992 and a 1997 General Accounting Office report on plans for the next census. Both raise concerns about whether census sampling is methodologically sound.

While the GAO conceded that sampling might be a potentially beneficial technique, especially when it comes to saving money, it said there might be problems with sampling's accuracy at the smallest unit level. "We were concerned," the GAO wrote, "that errors introduced by sampling nonrespondents ... would overshadow the benefits that these procedures could provide when applied to smaller geographic levels, such as census tracts." In other words, although sampling might marginally improve the total population account, sampling cannot really tell us where everyone is or in what density—precisely the information that affects districting and disbursement of federal moneys.

This shouldn't be surprising. Social reality is not a regular Newtonian vacuum with predictable contours; you can't assume the nation replicates census tracts in the way you can assume one drop of blood is representative of the body as a whole. To take one example, how should the Census Bureau guess at the distribution of African Americans based on a few or even a few dozen blocks when it has no idea which blocks have a "typical" distribution of minorities? Every census tract is unique, and there are simply too many variables for any expert to make accurate judgments about which areas to count and use as the basis for sampling. Sampling was originally proposed merely as an evaluation tool; using it to actually make part of the census count applies it to situations in which it is not sufficiently reliable.

These errors will inevitably be magnified as the estimates become more detailed. According to one member of the Census 2000 Advisory Panel, sampling's margin of error for a given block may reach ten to 15 percent. This means that, for a block actually containing 100 residents, it's possible the bureau would determine its total population to be anywhere from 85 to 115—hardly an insignificant difference. To be sure, the results at the state and national levels would be more accurate, but, when it comes to redrawing congressional districts in which every block counts, even these error margins can have consequences.

It's also unclear whether sampling would really do a better job of meeting its primary goal: counting the people who elude census-counters now. It stands to reason that some fraction of the four million left out in the 1990 census were probably people who, for various reasons, evaded the bureau on purpose—criminals, the superrich, people not paying child support, illegal immigrants, etc. There's no reason to believe sampling would be any more likely to accurately count these atypical Americans than the follow-up interviewers of yore.

For all these reasons, critics say, sampling may be far more trouble than it's worth. The statisticians and officials at the Census Bureau will hear nothing of such protests, however. They say that, as fewer and fewer people bother to respond to initial mailed questionnaires (the response rate in 1990 was down to 65 percent), the follow-ups will become even more expensive, and the case for sampling will only become stronger.

In a February 1998 article in *Science*, Richard Rockwell, a social demographer at the University of Michigan, claimed that one could perform a "really good census" by counting only 75 to 80 percent of the population and sampling the rest. John Thompson, associate director for the decennial census, said that, while this procedure isn't being considered for the next census, it has the potential to save millions of dollars in the

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future. "You could actually do an adequate census of the whole country with only sampling," Prewitt says. "With three million [samples], you could establish population groups as small as fifty thousand." His reasons for not recommending such a system are not methodological but civic. The census, he says, is "one of the few civic ceremonies that remain."

To be sure, nobody disputes that the current count has flaws. The problem, alas, is that nobody has shown that sampling would actually be more accurate. The exact size of any hypothetical undercount is always more or less unknown because demographic profiles—even ones based on birth and immigration records, which many experts use as baselines—are not radar images of the existent population any more than samples are. We know that current counts are wrong, but we don't know by how much. And we won't anytime soon. The remedy, in other words, is worse than the ailment. After all, a census widely believed to count more than 98 percent of the population may not be perfect, but that hardly makes it a failure.

There is a quaint and popular joke often dragged out, or so I am told, at gatherings of statisticians. Three men go hunting for bucks in the forest: an economist, a banker, and a statistician. The economist shoots his arrow first, and it lands ten feet in front of the buck. The banker then fires his, and it lands ten feet behind the buck. The statistician then leaps up and cries joyfully, "We hit it!" That makes the statistician a potentially deadly archer, but will he be eating venison for dinner?

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Why liberals stick with Clinton.

BLIND FAITH

By Walter Shapiro

I am a conscientious objector in the culture war over Bill Clinton's impeachment. I can't march on the White House arm in arm with Tom DeLay and Bob Barr demanding the blood sacrifice of a popular two-term president. Yet neither can I align myself with the likes of Dick Gephardt and Bob Torricelli and depict Clinton as a hapless martyr in a get-the-liberals plot by the religious right. I suppose I could enlist in the op-ed army of ineffectual handwringers still pleading for a congressional censure resolution against the president. But, beyond providing a fig leaf of dignity for congressional Democrats, all a censure resolution accomplishes is to give Clinton another opportunity to shed crocodile tears of mock remorse. What I want is the unattainable—for Clinton to serve out his elected term scorned by the majority of the American people. His solipsistic sins do not rise to the level of constitutional high crimes, but they are unforgiveable, now and forever.

The enduring mystery for me is not the psychological roots of the president's mendacity—or even the public's blithe tolerance of it—but, more specifically, the collective decision by the leading lights of American liberalism to serve as Clinton's enablers. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt won plaudits for his uncharacteristic eloquence as he beseeched his colleagues to "say 'no' to impeachment, 'no' to hatred, 'no' to intolerance of each other, and 'no' to vicious self-righteousness. We need to start healing. We need to start binding up our wounds." But these noble sentiments were marred by the partisan refusal of any Democrat to stand up and remind the nation of the arrogant dimensions of Clinton's misconduct. Listening to the House debate, I got the dispiriting sense that the choice was either voting with the rabid Republicans for impeachment on legally flimsy grounds or joining in the liberal embrace of the errant Clinton as the Democrats clucked, "How about a hug, Mr. President?"

Months of legal wrangling over impeachment have blinded liberals to the ironclad case for reviling Clinton. The proper penalty is not toothless censure but perpetual scorn. Do I overstate the case? The president's ethical bankruptcy is apparent when you review the familiar evidence in moral terms rather than through the legalistic prism of impeachable or indictable conduct. Maybe it was unfair that fate and Kenneth Starr conspired to subject the president to a yearlong character test, but it is undeniable that Clinton repeatedly flunked. How many times have we heard Clinton defenders declare with world-weary authority, "Everybody lies about sex"? But fibbing to your spouse cannot be equated with lying under oath. Blindsided by the detailed questions about Monica Lewinsky in the Paula Jones deposition, Clinton could have avoided protracted constitutional agony by ruefully confessing, "You got me. Yes, we messed around." Afterward, he still could have maintained a dignified public silence. Nothing other than a foolhardy political calculation forced the president to tell barefaced public lies, such as when he insisted to *Roll Call*'s Morton Kondracke that "the relationship was not improper."

When it comes to sex, Clinton has always been halfway between Arkansas and adolescence. For all his political talents, Clinton never understood that, in modern America, an Oprah-style confession can wash away all sins. A sadder-but-wiser Dick Morris gave the president shrewd advice when he told him, "There's a great capacity for forgiveness in this country, and you should consider tapping into it." But Clinton consciously chose the short-term expedient of not amend-

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ing his mendacious deposition in the Paula Jones case.

On the eve of Clinton's rendezvous with Starr's grand jury, the lead headline in *The New York Times* read: "PRESIDENT WEIGHS ADMITTING HE HAD SEXUAL CONTACTS." Now that Clinton was finally liberated from the strictures of a gentleman-never-tells cover-up, did he take the high road and finally tell the truth to a legally constituted grand jury? Yeah, sure. The grand jury lie that rankles is not the heavy-breathing one about who groped whom but rather an under-analyzed untruth—one that was seemingly motivated by political spin. Clinton testified, "When I was alone with Ms. Lewinsky on certain occasions in early 1996 and once in early 1997, I engaged in conduct that was wrong." As we know from the Starr report, Clinton's furtive frolics actually commenced during the mid-November 1995 government shutdown when Monica was still a thong-snapping intern. But, if the entanglement began in early 1996, as Clinton claimed, then he was merely guilty of being serviced by a paid staffer. Presidential apologists have routinely dismissed this misleading chronology as a slip of the tongue. But that interpretation strains credulity since it was the opening sentence of the prepared statement that Clinton read aloud at the beginning of his grand jury testimony. What seems obvious is that, even at this moment of maximum legal peril, Clinton thought he could get away with something—denying that he had ever engaged in sexual antics with a White House *intern*.

So why have liberals rushed to mortgage their own integrity in their zealous defense of Clinton's loathsome legalisms? There is something that smacks of Bonapartism in the Democrats' confusion of personal fealty with political principle. Another lustily oversized Democratic president (Grover Cleveland) was beloved "for the enemies he ... made." But why should the enmity of the Christian Coalition, Richard Mellon Scaife, and the tobacco companies excuse Clinton's lack of a moral compass in his personal life and his reckless disregard of the laws governing perjury? Part of the answer emanates from Clinton's unique status as the only politically successful Democratic president in 35 years. Downtrodden Democrats have come to believe that whatever magic elixir Clinton is peddling is a surefire cure for the party's maladies. So what if the president in the throes of "triangulation" privately excoriated the high-decibel extremism personified by Maxine Waters and Jerry Nadler? Such left liberals will defend Clinton to the death, fulminating against a right-wing coup since otherwise, they fear, they will be facing the abyss.

This permissive pattern predates the liberal rallying cry of "sexual McCarthyism." Democrats were conspicuously silent about the full extent of Clinton's anything-for-a-buck fund-raising practices in the 1996 campaign. Even though Clinton cost his party House seats by refusing to share his soft-money bounty with congressional candidates as he rolled up his margin against Bob Dole, Democrats were pantingly eager to excuse the president's latitudinarian campaign ethics.

Clinton's response to the campaign scandals can now be seen as a market test of the deny-and-lie strategy that he later followed with Monica. In his press conference, Clinton stressed the ersatz distinction between his reelection effort and the Democratic National Committee, saying, "I'm not trying to disclaim responsibility, but I am trying to point out that there is a difference between what the party does and what the campaign does." Rather than apologizing for hanging a "for sale" sign on the White House with his Lincoln Bedroom sleepovers and presidential coffees, an unrepentant Clinton defended his fund-raising with gusto. Responding to a March 1997 question about the coffees, Clinton declared: "I enjoyed them enormously. I found them interesting. I found them valuable."

Even as right-wingers mistakenly depict the president as an avatar of the free-love '60s (Clinton is, in truth, far more an old-fashioned philanderer), they are right about his amoral lust for power for its own sake. The unalterable truth about the Clinton presidency is that poll ratings always trump principle. What amazes me is that liberals, enthralled by Clinton's popularity, never criticized the president's appalling lack of a second-term agenda. Hark back to Clinton's 1997 inaugural address, when he fatuously declared, "Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution." This is a Democratic president who promised at the apogee of his political power to give America "a government that is smaller, lives within its means, and does more with less." Had Clinton been a moral exemplar, there still would have been scant excuse for liberals to revel in Clinton's truncated vision of what is politically possible amid unprecedented American affluence. But, even as Clinton's own reckless conduct has brought on an impeachment trial, Democrats insist on lionizing a president who is, at his core, an old-style moderate Republican.

In early December, New York intellectuals tried to replicate the full-throated glories of the antiwar movement with an anti-impeachment rally at NYU. What lingers in memory is novelist Mary Gordon gushing over Clinton without a tinge of irony: "Toni Morrison said that he may be our first black president. He may also be our first female president." That remark and the raucous applause that it inspired speaks volumes about the self-centered values of the American left. As long as Clinton upholds affirmative action and defends abortion rights, then his personal excesses and timid policies are to be defended at all costs. Honesty and integrity are dispensable attributes for a president who cleaves to the correct-thinking positions on gender and race. That is the moral swamp in which liberals have become mired because of their passionate embrace of a political cynic named Bill Clinton.

WALTER SHAPIRO is a political columnist for *USA Today*.

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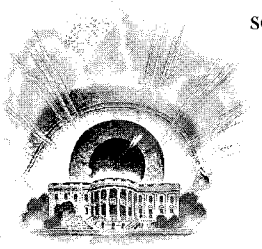
SEX-CRAZED

By Dana Milbank

I love it when they talk dirty on C-SPAN.

Scanning the public service network Monday, one found mostly the usual highbrow fare. There was a segment on "Federal-Tribal Relations" and a "First Amendment Report Card." At night, C-SPAN scheduled something called "Government Leaders." But this cagily titled segment was no Brookings forum. The sponsor: Larry Flynt. The topic: Republican adultery. Parental discretion: advised.

OK, I confess. I was disappointed when I tuned in at eleven o'clock in the evening only to find that the smut broadcast had been canceled, for fear that Flynt might slander somebody. I further confess my displeasure upon learning the next morning from reputable news outlets (the Drudge Report, Hustler.com) that the pornographer, other than revisiting Bob Barr's well-known hypocrisy, only teased about sexual revelations to come. Come on, Larry. That's PG stuff.



I am not proud of this craving for the salacious. But I have been spoiled by a daily dose of sex scandal in recent days. The president was rumored (falsely) to have fathered the 13-year-old son of a former Arkansas prostitute. Details of a purported (but old and unproven) sexual assault by Clinton were published. Flynt promised to expose ten adulterous congressmen. Even the Olympic organizers in Salt Lake City, it was rumored, had hired prostitutes for members of the International Olympic Committee. (The rumors proved false.) Clearly, we are all behaving strangely, and no wonder. We, as a nation, have become sex-crazed.

The latest wave began just after New Year's Day, in the first White House briefing of the year. The press was determined to hector the president's spokesman about the *Star*'s investigation of a mother claiming her boy Danny was Clinton's child. A photo of Danny was posted on the Internet. The story, peddled by the right-wing conspirators—the *New York Post*, Drudge, *The Washington Times*, and *The Weekly Standard*—turned out to be false, but that's not the point. It seemed many mainstream reporters—and a few White House staffers—believed it perfectly plausible that such a wild allegation could be true. Love child? Heck, why not? Livestock in the Oval Office study? Wouldn't put it past him. Here's how the skeptical ladies and gentlemen of the press dealt with the question at Joe Lockhart's briefing:

Q: Joe, did you mean to suggest this morning that you would disinvite any reporter who asked about this report of an illegitimate child?
Lockhart: No. I suggested for those of you who come with no independent reporting to repeat the gossip from tabloid, supermarket tabloids are wasting their time by coming to talk to me.
Q: Well, Joe, isn't it legitimate to ask about reports such as that?
Lockhart: Not like that. As all of you know, those reports have been around for years....
Q: But this is a new report. Does the White House have any comment on the report, Joe?
Lockhart: I'm not getting into it....
Q: Joe, I'm not here to defend the *Star* tabloid, but it seems to me they broke the story of Gennifer Flowers and the Dick Morris sex scandal.... Wouldn't it be more instructive to just deny or acknowledge the facts that are in question here, rather than try to smear that tabloid?
Lockhart: I'm not trying to smear.... I'm just not going to comment.
Q: [In] the picture on the Internet he looks exactly like the president.
Lockhart: That's good. And I'm an alien space baby....
Q: Do we have some of your DNA?

Fittingly, it was the Starr report that knocked down the *Star*'s report. The prosecutor's publication of Clinton's DNA pattern allowed the tabloid to compare Danny's sequence to Bill's. Sorry, no winner. The decision to publish the president's genetic makeup in the first place was a terrible invasion of privacy, of course, leaving Clinton's DNA there, naked, for all to see. But it raises an even more troubling question: Could evil scientists use the DNA sequence in the Starr report to clone the president? Perhaps they already have, millions of times over. How else are we to explain his unearthly popularity? Americans like Clinton because they *are* Clinton.

It's not just the press that's sex-crazed these days. The White House is doing strange things, too. Notably, the president's men didn't deny the love child outright. Part of this was tactical. "I wasn't going to give them the headline 'WHITE HOUSE DENIES,'" Lockhart told me later. But was Lockhart himself certain the story was false? "It was beside the point," he said. Another White House official, sensibly requesting anonymity, was more direct. "You never know," he said. "Look, it's Arkansas." Burned by believing Clinton denials before, White House officials weren't about to do it again. "The only person who could know if it was true was the president," the official said. "I don't think anybody asked him."

Clinton himself has been hiding from members of the press, dodging them at an environmental announcement this week and skipping the usual press conference when Argentina's president came to town. But, otherwise, most everyone in the West Wing is trying harder than ever to prove its business-as-usual theme. Al Gore was fighting urban sprawl and reinventing government. The White House even grabbed credit for "the longest peacetime economic expansion in history," though this meant acknowledging that it began in March 1991—

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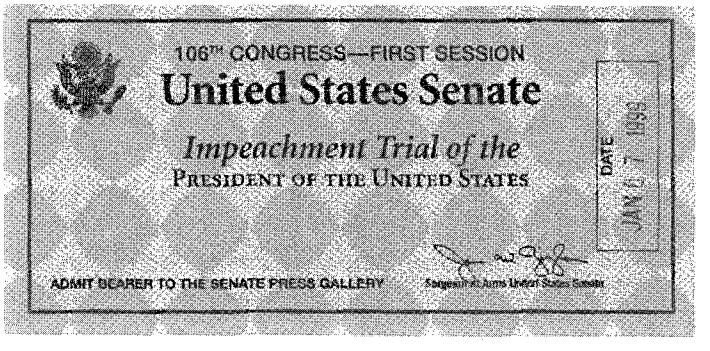
smack in the middle of George Bush's term.

One man in the Clinton administration remarked that the White House staff, with its impressive industriousness and unstinting loyalty, behaves very much like the dysfunctional family of an alcoholic father. Each time Dad falls off the wagon, Mom and the kids do their jobs even harder to compensate. To check this theory out, I called Al-Anon headquarters in Virginia Beach, where a director named Phyllis (no last names at Al-Anon) described an alcoholic man's family: "The family has incredible loyalty to this man, who has incredible potential. If you'd just cook better, clean better, take better care of the kids, he wouldn't drink as much." But this doesn't work out so well for the family. "You jeopardize your own health because you're trying to fix something that's not in your power to fix." Begala, beware.

Still, there are a few healthy signs of recovery at the codependent White House. For the first time, I heard somebody acknowledge the flaw in the business-as-usual argument. "There's no such thing as business as usual in this White House," Lockhart said. "The full-time investigations have created a circus atmosphere, and we live in it." At the moment, the circus act is about Senate trial witnesses, and the White House doesn't want them, of course. But it doesn't want to appear not to want them too much. "I'm worried people will misinterpret our aversion to witnesses as a worry that things will turn against us if this drags out," says one of Clinton's top advisers.



In truth, that probably won't happen. How many times in Whitewater did people think Clinton was just one witness away from an indictment? The real danger is the lost opportunity. Clinton doesn't have much time left to regain a small place in history, and that's the real threat to the White House (and the country) from an extended trial. Even if the House Republicans get to call witnesses, the White House at the moment doesn't plan to call its own. "Mike Espy won acquittal without calling a single witness," says a Clinton strategist. "All he did was ask fair questions of the prosecution's witnesses."

That seems reasonable, but perhaps my judgment, too, has been impaired by sex scandal. Hardly a day goes by without a new rumor about a Republican leader's sexploits: this one with a Mexican prostitute, that one with a congressional page. One Democratic partisan called me with details of a Republican leader's purported adulterous affair. The information, including the woman's name and the name of a person who could verify the charge, seemed solid enough. And the politician's moralizing about adultery, I rationalized, made the story fair game. Yet it was dirty business. So I did the morally upstanding thing: I passed off the information to TNR's interns (who declined to investigate). Shamed, I dropped the story once and for all, although something in me still hopes Larry Flynt will do the job. I won't write such trash, but I wouldn't mind reading it.

If the press and the White House have become sex-crazed of late, the original sex-scandal addicts have become even more bizarre. Ken Starr, who earlier proved his levelheadedness by sending subpoenas to a bookstore and Monica's mother, has now indicted Julie Hiatt Steele, a woman who challenged Kathleen Willey's charges against the president. Apparently, he's upset that this peripheral character committed the capital crime of lying to Larry King. Then there's the inimitable Barr, who has taken the unusual prosecution strategy of insulting the jurors (by mocking senatorial attention spans). One Clinton adviser now calls the impeachment managers "twelve angry men and one madman."

An even sadder example of sex-induced craziness is the sexual assault charge against Clinton that the House GOP has been peddling. It surfaced in raw files submitted by Starr, alleging that a "Jane Doe number five" signed an affidavit denying the Clinton assault allegation but then denied the denial. Though journalists knew her name privately, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial last week, hiding behind an old NBC report, finally outed the woman who suffered the alleged assault 20 years ago. In a flourish Joe McCarthy would have admired, David Schippers, the House Judiciary Republicans' lawyer, alluded to her claim at the end of the impeachment debate. Late in the hearings, he hinted at further, unspecified evidence that would justify impeachment—a disgraceful performance from a man who once cloaked himself in legal fairness.

Like Henry Hyde, Schippers started out as a picture of impartiality, telling TNR that he used Thomas More as a model. Invoking a passage from *A Man for All Seasons*, Schippers spoke of the distinction between man's law and God's law, suggesting that he, like More, would work strictly within the law, leaving morality to God. But Schippers's shenanigans, of dubious legal standing, betray a get-Clinton-at-any-cost sentiment. In the end, he came out more like Roper, the English politician with whom More argued. A New York banker, T. Michael Johnson, sent me the rest of the passage from which Schippers had quoted:

> More: What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?
> Roper: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!
> More: Oh? And when the last law was laid down, and the Devil turned round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat?... Do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?

No, Mr. Schippers, there is no Thomas More in this fight, not a saint among us. We're all consumed by sex. And we'll all feel guilty about it in the morning. •

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DISORDERS OF THE DAY

By David Grann

January 7

The Trial of the Century is about to begin, and, for at least a few minutes, the most powerful man on Capitol Hill is not President Clinton or Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott or even Sam Donaldson. It is Jim Talbert, the superintendent of the Senate periodical press gallery, who is handing out tickets to the show. By nine-thirty in the morning, Talbert has a pack of reporters hovering around him, hanging on his every word as he explains the elaborate set of rules that will govern if, and where, members of the press sit and where they may take notes.

Mindful of the impeachment wreckage in the House, the guardians of the Senate are trying something new: to impose on Bimbroglio a sense of decorum, even a hint of dignity. "I still believe that the Senate can restore some order to the anger that has overtaken the country and the chaos which threatens this city," Senator Robert C. Byrd vowed to his colleagues. But after a year of covering the scandal it is not clear to me that anything can truly tame it.

Up here in the gallery, Talbert is doing his part. While reporters from the big dailies, like *The New York Times*, have already taken their seats, the rest of us huddle together in a small room down the hall. There, Talbert passes out tickets one by one—thick, red pieces of paper that look as if they were for a high school prom. On the front, it says in bold letters: "IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES." On the back, various prohibitions are enumerated: "no packages, bundles, cameras, suitcases, calculators, electronic instruments, food, or briefcases . . . standing or sitting in the doorways and aisles, smoking, applauding, reading, taking notes, taking photographs, and the wearing of hats by men, except for religious purposes."

One by one, my luckier colleagues, including TNR's Dana Milbank, disappear into the Senate chamber, where an usher at the door exclaims: "This is history, boy! This is history." Finally, at ten o'clock, there is no one left in the room but me. "Sorry," Talbert says, "you can have a seat this afternoon."

I try to plead (I don't have a hat), but the rules are firm: only one seat per publication. Meanwhile, from the television set I hear the sergeant-at-arms: "Mr. President and members of the Senate, I announce the . . . proceedings on behalf of the House concerning the impeachment of William Jefferson Clinton, president of the United States."

Desperate to find something newsworthy, I rush across town to get into the National Press Club, where another side of the scandal is unfolding. Tonya Flynt-Vega, the daughter of the publisher of *Hustler* magazine, is giving a news conference to denounce her father, Larry Flynt. Flynt is everything the United States Senate wants to wash away with its proceeding: another tawdry character who has successfully inserted himself into History and, much to popular dismay, seems actually to be altering its course. His investigations into politicians' sex lives recently forced the House speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, into premature retirement, and Flynt is threatening to disclose even more names of adulterous members of Congress in the coming weeks.

Most of the reporters have already left by the time I arrive, and Tonya is sitting in a chair by a window overlooking the city, being interviewed by "Extra!," the TV gossip show. "My father is a pornographer," she says. "He does not deserve a respectable place in history." One of Tonya's handlers, J. Gordon Muir, gives me a book titled *Sex, Politics and The End of Morality: Why "Zippergate" is no big deal. Why 1 in 5 Americans have genital herpes!* Another handler passes me an op-ed by Tonya about her father titled "A SICK MAN ACTING OUT SERIOUS PATHOLOGY."

Tonya says she's too tired to do another interview, and so I offer to buy Tonya breakfast. "You might as well take him up on it," her spokesman says to her. "Once you get back to Florida you'll just be another person." She politely agrees, and we go to a nearby café, trailed by her growing entourage: a spokesman, two handlers, and a woman who says she once danced at one of Flynt's clubs. At the table, I ask Tonya why she is doing this today. "Because I care about my country," she says, eating a piece of pineapple. "This is my country as much as anyone else's." She has the same pale, heavy face as her father but with thicker blonde hair and a more gentle smile. She says she has evidence that her father's crusade to "out" members of Congress is being fed by the White House's secret dossiers, but she can't reveal the proof because she worries about her safety. "I hope I don't end up in some park like Vince Foster," she says.

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Then she looks at her spokesman. "How am I going to get to Fox [TV]?"

"The limo's coming at twelve-thirty," he answers.

I ask her if, like Paula Jones, anyone is funding her trip. "No group is bankrolling me," she says. "I didn't talk about my book deal at the press conference." She pauses and glances at her spokesman. "I thought I was supposed to do MSNBC."

When she turns back to me, she can tell what I'm thinking. "I'm not an extremist," she says. "I'm a victim of pornography." She pauses and stares at me unblinkingly. "My father molested me. He has destroyed me."

Her father has denied the allegations. But it is clear that something horrible, whatever it is, happened between them. And, as she tells me more of her life story, I realize her drama, like so much of the scandal, is about something I shouldn't know anything about—something deeply private that has inexplicably become public. After a few more minutes, I thank her for her time and say goodbye. As I walk out, I can hear her spokesman on the cell phone, calling the limo.

Back at the Capitol, order has already begun to break down. Both parties, I'm told, are wrangling behind the scenes over the rules of procedure, which will determine the fate of the presidency as much as the public displays of pomp.

Outside the cloakrooms, crews from 24-hour television networks like Fox and MSNBC have begun a stakeout. (Tonya is back on the air.) Reporters from *The New York Times* may have their reserved seats, but during these days of scandal it is the TV reporters who drive the proceedings. At the end of the day, senators shuttle outside onto the Capitol lawn—known as the swamp—to offer their spins on the most recent developments.

I ask a producer from the Fox News Channel, Anne Ball, if I can follow her around. Short with pretty black hair and a silk scarf around her neck, Anne holds a cell phone to her ear and pushes with her elbows to make sure she doesn't lose her place. Unlike the daily scribes, she must feed her beast every 30 minutes or so. But, for almost an hour, as we wait for Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle to address us, nothing seems to happen. Every once in a while, an aide bustles through the corridor, and we surge forward, only to recede a few minutes later. After a while, I open *Sex, Politics and the End of Morality* and flip through the index. It includes the following references: adult-child sex (nine times), animal-child sex (once), William Bennett (five), Connie Chung (one), Sigmund Freud (three), gay brain (one), Christopher Hitchens (one), North American Man/Boy Love Association (one), and Tim Russert (two). I turn to the section on Clinton's legacy and underline the following passage: "If Clinton has made a pact with Satan ... then Washington is Babylon."

Suddenly, someone hits me from behind, and my pen falls to the floor. The pack is surging forward again. "What is it?" I ask Anne. She says there's a rumor that Senator Barbara Boxer passed out and was carried off the Senate floor. She asks me to hold her place and disappears into the forest of television cameras. A minute later she returns. "Did you see the victim?" someone asks her.

She shakes her head, still talking into the phone. "From the swamp site they can see an ambulance," she says. "The CNN producers say she's being taken to the hospital." She pauses. "I don't know which hospital.... CNN says they may have caught it on the pool camera." She hangs up, then dials again. "We're on live in ten minutes."

As the reporters speak to one another, the story seems to gather steam. "Nolen said they had to put her in a wheelchair," Anne continues into the phone. "I don't know if you can say she collapsed—just say that she's not feeling well.... But this is *not* confirmed."

A few minutes later the frenzy dissipates: Boxer, it turns out, is only mildly ill and is still in the Capitol. Once again nothing seems to happen—the banality of History. The police have cordoned us off to one side, and members of the press keep slipping under the rope, certain there must be something to see if they're not allowed to see it. Finally, an aide appears and begins to set up a podium with microphones. "Daschle is coming," someone says.

Anne has managed to get to the front of the pack. There is a palpable sense of excitement, then ... *nothing*. "Where is he?" someone shouts. Finally, an aide appears and starts to dismantle the podium. "Daschle isn't coming," he says.

"You gotta be kiddin' me," Anne cries. "What are we supposed to do now?"

It is one o'clock. We funnel into the Senate chamber for the swearing-in ceremony. Talbert asks me to leave my book in the periodical office, so I bring only my pad and pen. But, when I start to take notes, a police officer leans over and says, "You can't write here."

"I'm press," I say, showing him my red ticket and reporter's badge.

"Sorry," he whispers, "these are non-note-taking seats."

I glance at my colleagues a few feet over, scribbling in their pads. There is an open seat on the end, and I slide over until I'm sitting on a stool right next to the railing.

I look down at the senators, then up at the ornate ceiling. If the House of Representatives is a giant public high school, then the Senate is a fancy private school. Each senator has his own varnished desk, with an inkwell and a sand-shaker for blotting ink. The members stand straight, as if each of them were balancing a book on his head. There is an air of dignity about the place, and yet even here there's no escaping the tawdriness of the business at hand. "I hear he's on Flynt's list," one of the reporters tells me, pointing to a gray pompadour down below. (There are, with a few notable exceptions, only two kinds of male heads in the Senate: a round bald pate or a helmet of white hair.)

Finally, Strom Thurmond, the 96-year-old president pro tempore from South Carolina, pounds his ivory

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gavel. "The Shenate wheel cum ta awdor," he says in his famously indecipherable accent. The outside doors swing open, and there is complete silence. In walk three pairs of senators escorting Chief Justice of the United States William Rehnquist down the aisle and up to Thurmond. "Wee awrr pleesh tah wheelcum ya," Thurmond says, gripping his arm.

"I am now ready to take the oath," Rehnquist says.

"Wull ye plaash yoar leff ham on ta bawble, an' rayse yur riiight ham."

Rehnquist raises his hand.

"Dew yee sawlemnly shwear ... ya well dew imparshall jushish ... sooh help yee Gawd."

"I do."

There is another long silence. Then, the senators all stand and raise their right hands. As each takes his oath, there is a clattering of voices: "I-do-I-do-I-do-I-do-I-do." For the first time in months, there is a sense that something truly important is happening—that maybe this is History. One by one, as the rules dictate, the senators go into the well to sign a registry. As they do, each one receives an old-fashioned pen emblazoned, alas, with the misprint "UNTIED STATES SENATOR."

On the eve of the trial, History slows to a halt, bogged down in a partisan battle over procedures. There is a widespread fear that something truly awful might happen if the members can't determine the rules: the Senate may turn into the House.

"We really don't want to look like *that*," says GOP Senator Susan Collins of Maine.

In the corridors members periodically emerge and express their panic to the press.

"We've got to get the ground rules hammered out and find a procedure," warns Ron Wyden of Oregon.

Right now there is "no procedural agreement on the procedures," says Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska.

There must be "some kind of procedure," says Senator Frank Murkowski of Alaska.

"If there're no ground rules," adds Olympia Snowe of Maine, "there is no procedure."

"We will proceed with rules," Trent Lott adds.

Finally, with no rules in order, the members cancel their scheduled vote that afternoon and flee the building. On my way out, I see Senator Ted Kennedy standing in the swamp, shivering in the cold as he stares at a camera.

January 8

This morning, there is one last, extraordinary attempt to regain control of the institution. Rather than meet in their customary separate conference rooms, both parties have agreed to gather for an unprecedented session in the Old Senate Chamber, where senators met from 1810 to 1859. The press is given a booklet to remind us of this room's sacred history—how far it is from Monica Lewinsky and semen-stained dresses. James Fenimore Cooper, we are informed, described the debate in the old chamber as "particularly dignified." John C. Calhoun, we are told, always wore "plain black clothing" inside. And Alexis de Tocqueville, we learn, wrote that the chamber "contains within a small space a large proportion of the celebrated men of America. Scarcely an individual is to be seen in it who has not had an active and illustrious career...."

On the way there, I bump into Thurmond. I take out my pad to ask him a question. But, before I can, he takes hold of my arm and starts to walk with me. "Where are we going?" I ask.

"The toylie," he whispers hoarsely.

"Where?"

"The *toylie*."

Uncertain, I escort him around the corner until we arrive at the Gentleman's Room. I realize then that he might thinks I'm one of his aides who ordinarily accompany him. Unsure what to do, I wait for him outside, then guide him to the Old Senate Chamber. As the cameras whir, Senator John Warner of Virginia comes up behind us and says, "I'll take my good friend."

As they go, I ask Thurmond what he hopes will happen today. "Advance the proseshure," he says.

Even as the senators are working to reestablish order in their own ranks, there is a rebellion in the press pen. The media are fed up with the special rules restricting their access to the trial. "It's like Check Point Charlie," says Linda J. Scott, producer for PBS's "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

Anne shakes her head. "I'm talking to someone, and two cops push me away," she says. "You can't just change the rules," one of the reporters says to an officer.

As the crowd grows more restless, the police issue a temporary decree: we can roam the halls until noon. "Martial law has been lifted," says David Rogers, the venerated reporter from *The Wall Street Journal*. But, as they try to rein us in again, there is an all-out revolt. The pack begins to surge from side to side, pushing and shoving. It is then that the senators emerge from the chamber hugging and smiling. "We have reached a bipartisan agreement on a procedure that follows the ancient rules of the Senate," Lott proclaims. Both sides agree they are not the House. "The United States Senate is in control of what happens in this procedure," says Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas. There is a sense that the history of the past has finally purged the history of the present: "We had a chance to allow the spirits of the Websters, Calhouns, and Clays to ... infect us a bit," says Democratic Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut. Indeed, in the middle of the meeting, Senator Byrd reportedly stood up in the old chamber, clutching the "Standing Rules of the Senate" in one hand and the "Procedure and Guidelines for Impeachment Trials in the U.S. Senate" in the other and proclaimed: "We have rules!"

But rules can do only so much. Decorum is not the same as dignity, proceduralism as purity. None of the orchestrated solemnity can cloak the true business at hand. Within a few hours, the press in the pen are already chasing the other side of the story: Flynt has promised to name new names. •

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The successful failures of Kofi Annan.

UP THE ORGANIZATION

By David Rieff

Nineteen-ninety-eight began as well for United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as it ended badly. The successor to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian diplomat whose tenure had been marked by the terrible failures of U.N. peacekeeping in Bosnia and Rwanda, who was widely loathed even by members of his own secretariat, and whose reelection had been blocked by the United States, Annan seemed to offer the promise of a new beginning for the United Nations; and the promise seemed to materialize on February 24, 1998, when Annan returned from Baghdad to U.N. headquarters in New York to a tumultuous, ecstatic throng of U.N. staff members. In the days leading up to Annan's trip, the world had watched nervously as the United States threatened to attack Iraq in retaliation for Saddam Hussein's refusal to let U.N. weapons inspectors continue their internationally mandated search for Iraq's chemical and biological weapons. Now Annan had negotiated an agreement with the Iraqi leader under which the weapons inspectors could return, forestalling a second Gulf war. Annan asserted buoyantly that Saddam Hussein "is a man I can do business with." War had been averted, and the United Nations itself could claim a success. Annan's mission seemed to prove that the organization was indeed as invaluable to world peace and security as its founders had imagined half a century earlier.

But the promise fizzled. The following December, when Annan emerged to brief reporters about Iraq again, the mood on the East River was altogether more somber. His deal with Saddam Hussein had long since fallen apart. The UNSCOM inspectors had never really been able to resume their work. After months of saber-rattling, the Clinton administration had decided to launch a four-day air campaign against Iraq. In February, Annan had been acting with the blessing of the United States; indeed, Annan was making himself indispensable to the Americans, who needed him to help them climb down from a threat of force that had grown hollow in the wake of the Lewinsky scandal and the disastrous failure of the president's top national security aides to make the case for war against Iraq in a televised public meeting at Ohio State University. According to both U.N. and Clinton administration officials, the White House, fearing a domestic political fiasco, suddenly gave the secretary-general the encouragement he needed to proceed but that it had previously withheld. In December, however, the United States acted without so much as consulting Annan, or taking his views into account, or giving the United Nations anything but an eleventh-hour heads up about its plans. Far from being at the center of world events, the United Nations, and its most visible and ostensibly powerful official, seemed once more to have been relegated to irrelevance and impotence. It was, Annan said, "a sad day for the United Nations and for the world."

In the wake of Operation Desert Fox, there have been news reports of tension between Annan and the Clinton administration. According to *The Washington Post*, some members of the U.N. secretariat were furious to discover that the United States had been using UNSCOM as a cover for its own gathering of intelligence about the Iraqi regime. (Other Annan aides deny any rift.) Clinton administration aides were also furious, and embarrassed, at the leak. They are indignant that Annan seems more concerned about preserving the secrets and sovereignty of a U.N. member state than he is about the fact that the member state in question is a murderous tyranny and that the reason for the intelligence effort was that Saddam's regime had continued to stockpile and develop weapons in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

It is easy to overestimate, in the heat of the moment, the importance of the Iraqi crisis either on relations between the United States and the United Nations or on Kofi Annan's own future. Annan is certainly stuck with the United States, the U.N.'s most powerful member state, and the United States is probably stuck with him. The United Nations cannot hope to flourish without American support. But the United States now owes $1.5 billion to the United Nations in back dues and unpaid peacekeeping expenses, and shows little sign of being willing to pay in full anytime soon. For Annan, the United Nations is the indispensable organization, and he does not seem to understand how any American could fail to see how much the United Nations serves not only the interests of the U.S. government but also the interests of ordinary Americans.

American officials, for their part, are quietly fuming. They point out privately that getting the secretary-

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generalship for Annan was anything but easy. The story of the maneuvering that was required is fairly convoluted. The United States is feared at the United Nations but also increasingly disrespected by other powerful member states impatient with the U.S. refusal to pay its debts. Recently, the United States lost a seat on a powerful U.N. budget committee, a trend that is only likely to continue if the stalemate over the U.S. repayment of its arrears continues. More generally, other member states (Britain predictably excepted) have been less disposed than ever before to be compliant with American wishes. And African countries were incensed that Boutros-Ghali, the first secretary-general to come from the African continent, was to be denied a second term.

An African successor was clearly needed. Kofi Annan was hardly the only credible African candidate. There was Salim Salim, the head of the Organization of African Unity, and the exiled Ugandan politician Olarra Otunnu, and Amara Essy, the foreign minister of the Ivory Coast (the preferred candidate of the French). For a while, Otunnu looked like the front-runner. But, for the Clintonites, Annan was a known quantity. In his memoirs, Richard Holbrooke, the architect of the Dayton peace accords who is now President Clinton's nominee to be U.N. ambassador, credited Annan with having helped facilitate the NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, though some State Department officials dispute this interpretation, and, in any case, it is not clear whether Annan supported military action or simply thought it unwise to be anything but helpful.

What the Americans also believed was that Annan shared their assumptions. After all, he was educated in America—at Macalester College in Minnesota and, after he was already well along in his career at the United Nations, at MIT. Annan has spent so much of his life in America that there are those who believe he is as much the first American secretary-general as the first from sub-Saharan Africa.

"What the U.S. wants is what the U.N. wants," Annan once told the National Press Club. Annan was specifically referring to institutional reform. But, noting that the United States and the United Nations shared the same values, the point he was making was a broad one. In the wake of the U.N.'s moral fiasco in Bosnia, what the Americans wanted was a figure who would serve their interests but also—such are the paradoxes of U.S. power—a person who would be prepared to view the conflicts of the post-cold-war world through a moral lens. Depending on one's point of view about American foreign policy, those may or may not have been irreconcilable requirements. What now seems inescapable is the fact that Annan, who himself has taken pains to emphasize how well he knows the United States and how close he feels to Americans, is not a man who can fulfill either expectation.

In his speeches Annan can seem naïve, though naïveté is rarely an attribute of those who attain high political office. He is the sort of fellow who can list, with a straight face, the U.N.'s role in setting standards for air transport alongside its performance in international peace and security among the ways the United Nations is part of the daily lives of Americans. Annan's partisans tend to say that he is simply idealistic. They also insist that, like any of his predecessors, he has a very limited capacity to shape the events for which he is held to account. But there is more to it than that. Idealism, or a refusal to regard the evil in the world realistically, is precisely the problem. In Iraq today, as in Bosnia, Rwanda, and a host of other countries in which the United Nations has been involved in the past, the secretariat of the United Nations is, in principle and practice, committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts at almost any price. When Annan said that Saddam Hussein was a man with whom he could do business, what he was really saying was that he could do business with anyone who would talk to him.

Anyone who saw the United Nations operate in Bosnia could not have been surprised by such a statement. In the former Yugoslavia, this even-handedness functionally put the United Nations on the side of the Serb aggressors, as it blocked military responses by its own peacekeepers and by NATO airplanes in support of the peacekeepers. The United Nations was quite shameless about this and defended the rightness of its role to the hilt. As one senior official would put it a year after the Dayton peace agreements, "We've been here for several years; we've done a great job; and I think we've achieved one of our main objectives, which was to create time and space for the politicians and the diplomats to negotiate a peace agreement." That official's name was Kofi Annan.

At the time, Annan had just completed a stint as U.N. special envoy for Bosnia and had returned to his post as head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is hard not to feel that the families of the 8,000 men and boys marched to their deaths in the U.N.-designated "safe area" of Srebrenica, as U.N. peacekeepers looked on, would not have taken quite so sunny and self-exonerating a view as the one Annan expressed when he admonished that "it must not be forgotten that the Security Council resolutions proclaiming the safe areas never asked the United Nations to either 'protect' or 'defend' them, merely to 'deter attacks' by its presence."

Annan has steadfastly rejected the suggestion that the United Nations in Bosnia stood for what he has called "unthinking, or even amoral, neutrality between the warring parties." But even his language gives him away. He does not speak of the Bosnian government side and the secessionist Serbs or of aggressors and the victims of an aggression; he speaks in the sanitized, value-neutral language of "warring parties." And, predictably, he blames everyone but the United Nations for the fiasco. Writing of UNPROFOR, the U.N. peacekeeping force, he says that it "found itself obstructed, targeted by all sides, denied resupply, restricted in its movements, and subjected to constant criticism."

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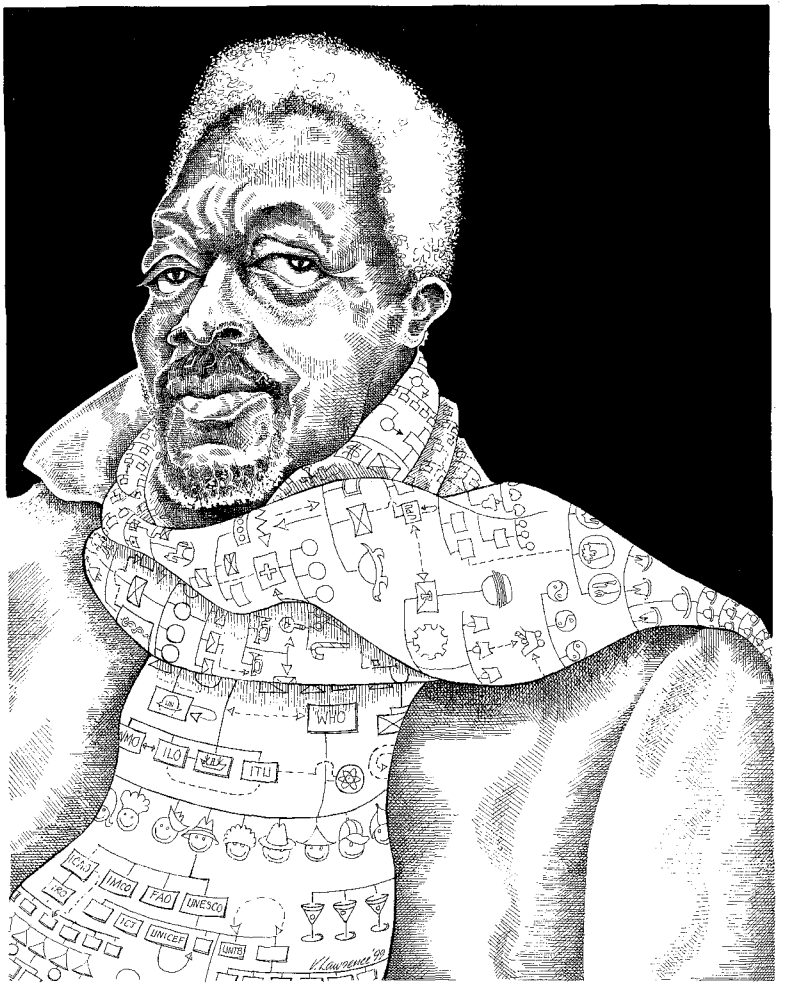
Like most career U.N. officials, Annan is a man who is reluctant to condemn any member state. After a lifetime at the secretariat, this seems to have become a matter both of doctrine—the United Nations stands for nothing if not the principle that all recognized governments are equally legitimate—and of self-interest—you never know which delegation's support you may need to get ahead in the bureaucracy. He has made it abundantly clear in his conduct toward Iraq, as he did in Bosnia and Rwanda, that moral judgments are not part of what he sees as his role. He may make pronouncements about the state of the world, but, when it is time for him to get down to cases, even the Iraqis can be confident that they will get a sympathetic hearing. It should surprise no one that Annan's approach toward Saddam Hussein has not been all that different from his approach toward Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic—other interlocutors with whom he was ready to do business, uninfluenced by whatever private views he held.



KOFI ANNAN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is important, then, when considering the severe limitations of Kofi Annan, to emphasize the fact that he is the first U.N. secretary-general to have been neither a career diplomat nor a politician. He is, rather, a career U.N. bureaucrat. Indeed, few of the positions Annan held took him away from the major Western capitals. He was a headquarters man, more at home in New York than in Nairobi. Indeed, members of Annan's immediate circle look decidedly uncomfortable when talk of his "Africanness" arises. "The S.G. would not want to be thought of simply as an African," one of them said nervously. Another remarked, more baldly, "It's true that Annan is not a very African African." Apart from his time at MIT, Annan left U.N. service only once, returning to his native Ghana in the mid-'70s to work on national tourism development there. It was not a happy experience. After two years, the future secretary-general returned to the United Nations, complaining that the heavy hand of state control was so great at home that there was simply nothing he could do.

In more than 30 years within the U.N. bureaucracy, Annan worked in many U.N. departments, including finance and personnel, as well as for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, before his stint as head of U.N. peacekeeping under Boutros-Ghali. As he has advanced, he appears to have made few enemies. "Nice," "decent," "a pleasure to work for": these are the words that come up again and again.

But, if the man is uncontroversial, his record is not—although for some reason the past does not stick to Annan. It is true that the U.N.'s debacle in Bosnia took place under Boutros-Ghali's administration, but it was Annan, who, as head of the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) from 1993 on, had direct responsibility for the U.N. operations in the former Yugoslavia. He carried out Boutros-Ghali's instructions to the letter, and, in public speeches and appearances at seminars, he vigorously defended all the U.N.'s actions. He seemed to believe that the United Nations was a real victim in the story. And for Rwanda, too, he has largely escaped the opprobrium that the United Nations deservedly earned during and after the genocide. Yet that failure, also, took place on Annan's watch.

Annan was still head of the DPKO in early 1994, when the first intimations that a genocide was brewing in Rwanda reached the United Nations. General Romeo Dallaire, the U.N. peacekeeping commander on the ground in Rwanda, had learned through a confidential informant that the Rwandan government itself was behind the plans for the extermination of the country's Tutsi minority. Alarmed, Dallaire cabled the DPKO, suggesting that he take immediate action against the ringleaders. Annan's response was not long in coming (though it is not clear whether the letter sent to Dallaire over Annan's name actually came from him or was sent by another official, the Pakistani diplomat Iqbal Riza, now Annan's *chef de cabinet*, in Annan's name). Dallaire was ordered not to

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take radical steps to halt the plans for genocide that he had been told of by his Rwandan informant. Nor did Annan offer to take the matter to the Security Council. Instead, Dallaire was ordered to inform the Rwandan authorities and the United States, French, and Belgian ambassadors in Kigali, the Rwandan capital.

Annan would later insist that he had done what he could, a contention firmly supported by Iqbal Riza and by Hedi Annabi, the Tunisian diplomat who was then the New York-based official responsible for the Rwandan peacekeeping operation. And, while Dallaire's cable and Annan's response are now public, the details of what happened remain unclear. There is some justice in the claim made by Annan's supporters that, even had he taken the matter to the Security Council, nothing would have been done. After all, they insist angrily and convincingly, when the genocide was in full swing the Security Council refused the U.N. secretariat's pleas to act.

But this is not how Rwandans see it. Rwanda is one of the few places in the world where Annan is widely reviled. The fact is that he has steadfastly refused to offer any personal mea culpa and that his admissions about the U.N. failure in Rwanda have been phrased in such a way, as one Rwandan official has put it, "to subsume the particular guilt of the U.N. inside the general guilt of the international community."

The Annan strategy in this matter was of a piece with U.N. officials' customary strategy when confronted with accusations of failure. In the U.N. view, the United Nations cannot be said to fail, because it does only what the member states sanction it to do. Of course, before the genocide, the United Nations had not hesitated to take credit for the peace accord between the Hutu-dominated government and the Tutsi-led guerrillas of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. But it is now clear that this accord, far from averting catastrophe, may have accelerated it.

There is also the matter of Kofi Annan's catastrophic visit to Rwanda in May 1998. The Rwandans were angry when he arrived, and they were right to be. At a press conference in Nairobi, he insisted again that he would not have done anything differently. The result was that, by the time he arrived in Kigali, all the old Rwandan wounds had been reopened. At the Parliament, Annan sat stonily as members denounced him. Much of the Rwandan leadership boycotted the reception in his honor.

And Kofi Annan is not the sort who would offer a mea culpa. His gift is not for moral candor or moral leadership. It is a merely diplomatic gift, which is to reconcile seemingly irreconcilable positions. After the polarizing period of Boutros-Ghali, a conciliator is undoubtedly welcome in Turtle Bay, but the secretary-generalship of the United Nations is a position of more than institutional import. The secretary-general must offer a vision of the world; indeed, given the powerlessness of his office in real terms, a vision of the world is most of what he can offer. Annan has at times referred to the "crisis of faith" in the organization, but he gives no indication of having understood the content or the context of that crisis. Instead, he endlessly restates the case—or rather, the excuses—for the United Nations. The fact that any person of good will could not believe in the United Nations is, for U.N. people, a mystery. Annan is the perfect representative of this insular, apologetic culture of self-justification and self-exoneration.

The legacy of this secretary-general is likely to be entirely institutional. He has shown less interest in redefining his organization's values than in reaching out to his organization's constituencies. He certainly developed new constituencies for the United Nations, particularly among activist human rights and humanitarian organizations whose influence on public opinion has been steadily increasing. And he is certainly on firm intellectual ground when he insists that the U.N.'s critics in Congress mask a visceral hostility to the institution in the language of institutional reform. "What we are really being asked to undertake is not U.N. reform but assisted suicide," one U.N. official remarked to me. Soon after his term began in 1997, Annan made a well-publicized pilgrimage to see the U.N.'s Senate nemesis, Jesse Helms, to promise the North Carolinian reforms in exchange for U.S. money. Annan claimed then, and continues to insist, that he has reformed the U.N.'s sclerotic and corrupt bureaucracy. But still the money hasn't flowed. Annan is said to be disappointed, and one of his aides insisted grimly that "we will be making fewer trips [to Washington] in the future."

Still, Annan's determination to influence American public opinion has only increased in the past year. His new strategy seems to be to cultivate those sectors of the American public who in the past were the U.N.'s natural supporters, and these are precisely the constituencies that the United Nations lost during the U.N.'s "silly season" in the 1970s, when the deliberations of the General Assembly were dominated by anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism as well as efforts to impose draconian restrictions on press freedom worldwide and to punish international corporations. As one senior adviser to Annan put it: "In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.N. had the support of Jews, liberal Republicans, and the elite media. What happened? During the 1970s, the U.N. got involved in the Zionism is Racism resolution, the New International Economic Order, and the New International Information Order. How could these groups not have been alienated? But that is not what the U.N. stands for today, and we think we need to make that fact known."

Annan has moved on many fronts to do this. He has insisted that it is time for "a new era of relations" between the United Nations and Israel. He has turned his back on the U.N.'s previous sympathy for statist solutions to economic development in the poor world, emphasizing its acceptance of globalization and market capitalism as the context in which development must take place. Indeed, he has spoken so glowingly of globalization that, at the Davos meeting in 1997, the chief

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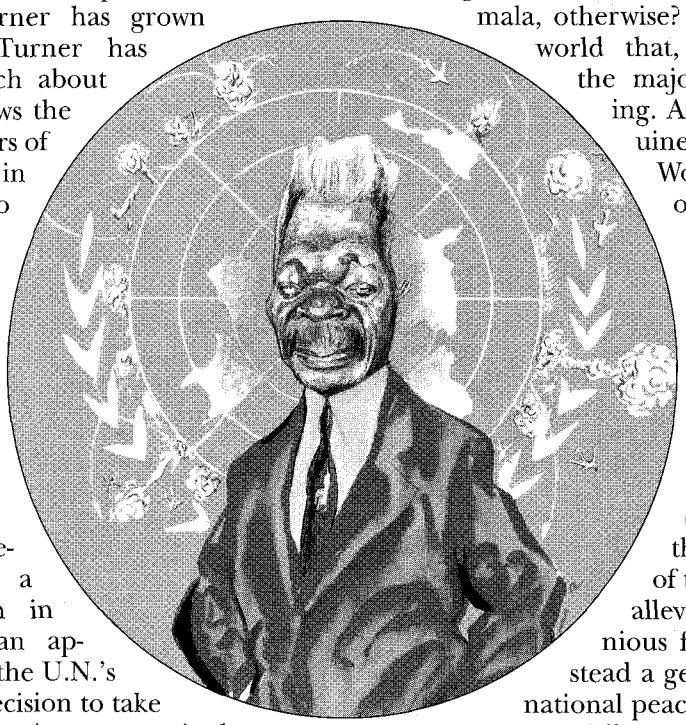
of the conference remarked wonderingly after the secretary-general's speech that, having seen the end of the East-West conflict, he had now seen the end of the North-South conflict. Annan spoke before the full implications of the Asian economic meltdown and particularly its terrible fallout in sub-Saharan Africa were known, and his enthusiasm was always tempered by the awareness of those who were not benefiting from the growth and expansion of free markets. His aides insist that, in reaching out to business, Annan is only recognizing reality. In time, they say, having won the confidence of the business establishment, Annan will begin to make demands—on human rights, business standards, and the environment. Still, Annan is madly marketing his allegedly lofty institution. He has been doggedly courting multinational corporations, and his relationship with Ted Turner has grown increasingly important. (Turner has partly underwritten research about the way the U.S. public views the United Nations, and members of his staff have participated in planning a new strategy to "sell" the United Nations in America.) There are those who believe Annan is compromising the dignity of the office. But dignity, depending on one's attitude toward Annan, is either an irreducible element of his character or his stock-in-trade.



Thus the "American" secretary-general has acquired a supremely American faith in publicity campaigns. Annan appears to revel in the role of the U.N.'s master pitchman. But the decision to take this road suggests again that Annan genuinely has not understood why the reputation of the U.N. has declined, and deservedly. He seems to view all the criticism of the United Nations as a matter of public relations. Even as he appoints serious and able people to important positions—Pino Arlacchi, the Italian senator and expert on the Mafia, to head the U.N.'s anti-crime program, and Mary Robinson, the former president of Ireland, to the post of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights—he names Michael Douglas as a "messenger of peace."

Those who work within the U.N.'s alphabet soup of specialized agencies are all but unanimous in insisting that cooperation between departments has never been better. At Annan's insistence, there are now regular meetings in departments and between departments. For a sclerotic bureaucracy such as the United Nations, this is not nothing. But it is managerial, and managerialism is not enough. What exactly does the United Nations stand for? Annan has not made this clear. He appears to believe that the question will be answered by the member states at the "millennium conference" that he is planning. But the members cannot agree on the answer in the Security Council or in the General Assembly. Why should they agree at a staged event? Given the realities of the world, and the realities of the United Nations, perhaps Annan could not have done any better. Some of his defenders have been hinting as much. He may be the ideal secretary-general, they say, for a time when there is not much that the United Nations can do.

Annan has shown himself capable of operating soberly around the margins, in crises or conflicts that do not broach first principles. Thus he recently went to Morocco to try to sort out the intractable problem of Western Sahara. Who would care for that country's sufferings, or for those of Sierra Leone, or Guatemala, otherwise? Those are the parts of the world that, with the cold war over, the major powers are busy redlining. And Annan's concern is genuine: not for him the Third World clichés of Boutros-Ghali or the grandee's coldness of Perez de Cuellar. Annan's commitment has not produced enormous results, but he has persevered, laboring honorably on matters the great powers to which he is answerable care little about.

But these successes have come at the margins, and they are premised on a notion of the United Nations as a giant alleviation machine, a sanctimonious fixer, when it should be instead a genuine instrument for international peace and security. Kofi Annan's success or failure as secretary-general—he has three years left in his five-year term—will be judged by more stringent standards. And his record so far suggests that he will continue to succeed at small things and fail at big things. The mood at the United Nations has shifted from the euphoria of his first year to the realization that what follows will be much, much tougher. The Iraqi debacle seems to have boxed the United Nations in. And the secretary-general's conciliatory temperament, and his reliance on experts who tend to see the U.N.'s problems as largely affairs of better systems and better advertisements, will not improve matters. He is a decent man who has presided over shocking indecency. To his core, he is a bureaucrat. He operates professionally without a moral lens. He is the world's most prominent organization man. This man who gets along so well with Saddam Hussein, and who does not understand the hatred so many Rwandans feel for the United Nations—and for him—and who does not see what the United Nations really did in Bosnia may be too small for these large times. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Accepted Fates

New England. Winter. Snowy countryside, skies black with cold. Hard-bitten folk, surviving. *Ethan Frome. Way Down East.* Ah, it's good to be back in that barren landscape, so fertile for American drama.

Affliction (Lions Gate) was adapted from a Russell Banks novel by Paul Schrader, who then directed. Another Banks novel, *The Sweet Hereafter,* set in much the same climate and terrain, became a haunting film in 1997. Paul Sarossy, who shot that picture, is also the cinematographer here, with the same ability to make the snow seem part of interiors and to make the exteriors, even with flakes falling, seem no less habitable than warm rooms. Schrader's last notable work, adapted by Harold Pinter from Ian McEwan, was set in the voluptuary Venice of *The Comfort of Strangers;* here Schrader suffuses his film with the smell of wet wool and cheap whiskey and cigarette smoke in the cabs of pickup trucks.

In this atmosphere lives Wade Whitehouse, sole policeman of a small town, separated from his (remarried) wife and their small daughter. He loves the child but bungles her visits with him. He bungles relations with lots of people he would really like to get on with. He is a big man, given to spurts of violence that are almost expected of him by now. Hovering—more than hovering—in the background is his father, as big as he is and even more of a drinker, more violent. Wade has a brother, Rolfe, who (unexplained, though he comes from precisely the same background) is a professor in Boston. Rolfe is from time to time a commentator, through voice-overs, on the story we watch. That story begins with a seemingly accidental death on the first day of the deer-hunting season; from this death, events then lead to Wade's loss of his job, his involvement in more deaths, and his eventual disappearance from the town and from everybody's ken.

Schrader deploys this decline and fall before us enticingly enough to tease us into "if only." We keep wanting to reach into the screen to stop foolish actions. This is a tribute to the director and his actors, because most of these characters, as such, are not deeply interesting, and the overall motion of the story is early manifest. But the principal performances, by Nick Nolte as Wade and James Coburn as his sodden ultra-macho father, provide the film with a rock-hard texture that commands attention. Nolte in particular keeps reaching into niches of feeling that give his blustery brute some poignancy—no small achievement for a character who pulls his own aching tooth with a pair of pliers, swirls some whiskey around his mouth, then keeps going.

In fact, Nolte and Coburn are so powerful that they distort what, we are told, is the story's theme. Both men are physically huge. (Willem Dafoe, as Rolfe, Wade's professor-brother, is not.) We sense that these two men are so strong that they get impatient with restraining that strength, that they seek or contrive occasions just to cut loose. But at the end we get a moralizing voice-over from Rolfe to the effect that what we have witnessed was an instance of a father passing on to a son a tradition of wife-abuse. This is not what we have seen. *Affliction* is about a stratum of society trapped in a societal jet lag, a frontier ethos marooned in a more complex world. Women are used and abused by such men, of course, but so—as we see more often—are other men. And size, the sheer surge of the power to vent impatience and frustration on others, aggravates the trouble. (Perhaps it's because I'm only 5' 8 ¼" that I burrowed out this subtext; still, it seems pertinent to the picture.) Thus, with hardly one sympathetic or admirable action, Nolte's Wade becomes somewhat pathetic.

What a great relief it was to see **Private Confessions** (Castle Hill/First Run). (The U.S. premiere was at the Film Forum in New York.) This screenplay, directed by Liv Ullmann, was adapted by Ingmar Bergman from his book of the same name published in 1966; and, aside from anything else, this screenplay is a genuine Bergman work. The last Bergman film shown here, for a few times only, was a 118-minute TV piece called *In the Presence of a Clown,* which he both wrote and directed—a loose and maundering ramble about a psychiatric patient. *Clown* was so flabby, so devoid of Bergman intensity, that it left one viewer worried about its 79-year-old maker. But *Private Confessions,* though he didn't direct it, is Bergman again.

He has called his three books about his parents "novels." (The two earlier ones were *Sunday's Children* and *The Best Intentions.* Both of them he adapted for

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dancing at Lughnasa. *Too long for its subject, but finely made. Meryl Streep is one of five Donegal sisters, in 1936, contending with spinster lives. (Reviewed 11/30/98)* **Hilary and Jackie.** *Biography done with warmth, imagination, and fictional touches. Jacqueline Du Pré, the cellist who died cruelly young, and her sister. (12/21/98)* **Hurlyburly.** *Hollywood sleaze insidiously well dramatized. Sean Penn and Kevin Spacey as Movieland agents who share a house, women, and dissolution. (1/18/99)* **Shakespeare in Love.** *Fun. In love he writes* Romeo and Juliet. *Life swirls high in London, 1593. (1/4&11/99)*—**SK**

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the screen, and both were directed by others.) The general facts about his parents' marriage were already well known, but perhaps the tag of fiction gave him the license he felt he needed to write dialogue and actions that occurred before he was born—in some scenes he is present in his mother's womb—or when he was a child.

Private Confessions consists of five conversations. Anna Bergman, the author's mother, is in all of them; Henrik, her clergyman-husband, Tomas, her seminarian-lover, and Uncle Jacob, her religious guide and confessor, appear in the others, though only one at a time. The first conversation is in 1925 in Stockholm. The others follow after differing time-lapses—a few weeks, ten years—except that the last scene is set back in 1907, in Upsala, when the 17-year-old Anna is to make her first communion with Uncle Jacob.

Marriage, love, desire, ego, honor—all these are materials of the conversations, not new in the Bergman canon but addressed here with the same Strindbergian candor as before. Anna makes her way through life, reconciling passion with responsibility. The two most interesting aspects of the screenplay are intrinsic and extrinsic. First, when Anna confesses her affair to Uncle Jacob, the advice he gives her turns out to be poor, and she conceals this dire result from him, to help maintain his status as sage both for his sake and hers. Second is Bergman's persistent concern with the marriage and sexual lives of his parents. Many artists have treated this subject (e.g., Lawrence in *Sons and Lovers*), but Bergman is absolutely captivated by it. He seems to have saved it up for his old age. Clergymen and their private lives figured in some of his earlier work, but they were Bergman's contemporaries. Since he virtually gave up film directing, he has concentrated on his parents. It can't quite be said that *Private Confessions* opens up vast new realms in the material, but its honesty and perception are absorbing.

Sven Nykvist, the magical cinematographer of many Bergman films, here apostrophizes Bergman's favorite subject, the human face. Liv Ullmann surely has relied on Nykvist, though this is her third directing assignment. We are asked not to assume that she had advice from the script's author. In any case she has aimed, with much success, at the Bergman ideal of filling space between two people with almost visible thought and feeling.

Pernilla August once again plays Anna. She is sound and true, but we can't help thinking that, except for the passage of some decades, the director herself might be playing the role and with more delicacy. Samuel Froler is Henrik again, making clear both why Anna married him and why the marriage is troubled. The treasure, however, is Max von Sydow as Uncle Jacob, first elderly, then ancient, then, in the last scene—the prologue-epilogue—only middle-aged. Make-up and costume don't make von Sydow's changes. Genius does. •

Serious Mischief

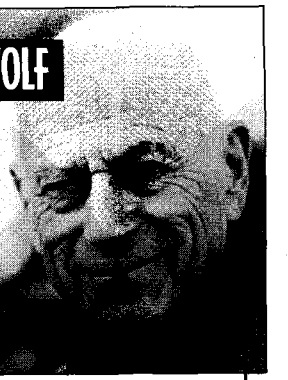
BY JOSEPH LEO KOERNER

Inside Bruegel: The Play of Images in *Children's Games* by Edward Snow

(North Point Press, 204 pp., $40)

I.

The Bruegel room in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna has something of the character of the pictures exhibited in it. In this popular and imposing gallery hang twelve of the world's best-loved paintings, the core of Pieter Bruegel's output. Executed in Antwerp in the last decade of the artist's life, between 1559 and 1569, these works seem to belong together as a suite, despite their various patrons and subjects. This is owed partly to similarities of format. Painted meticulously in oil on oblong wooden panels of approximately the same ample proportions, Bruegel's familiar icons of peasant revelry, biblical history, popular games and customs, and seasonal labor all seem in equal measure monumental and intimate. All command the grand public space in which they hang, yet each speaks individually to the viewer who, drawn close to its painted surface, will feel that the pic-



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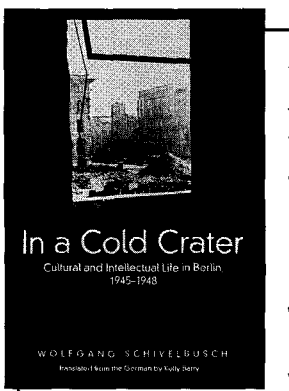

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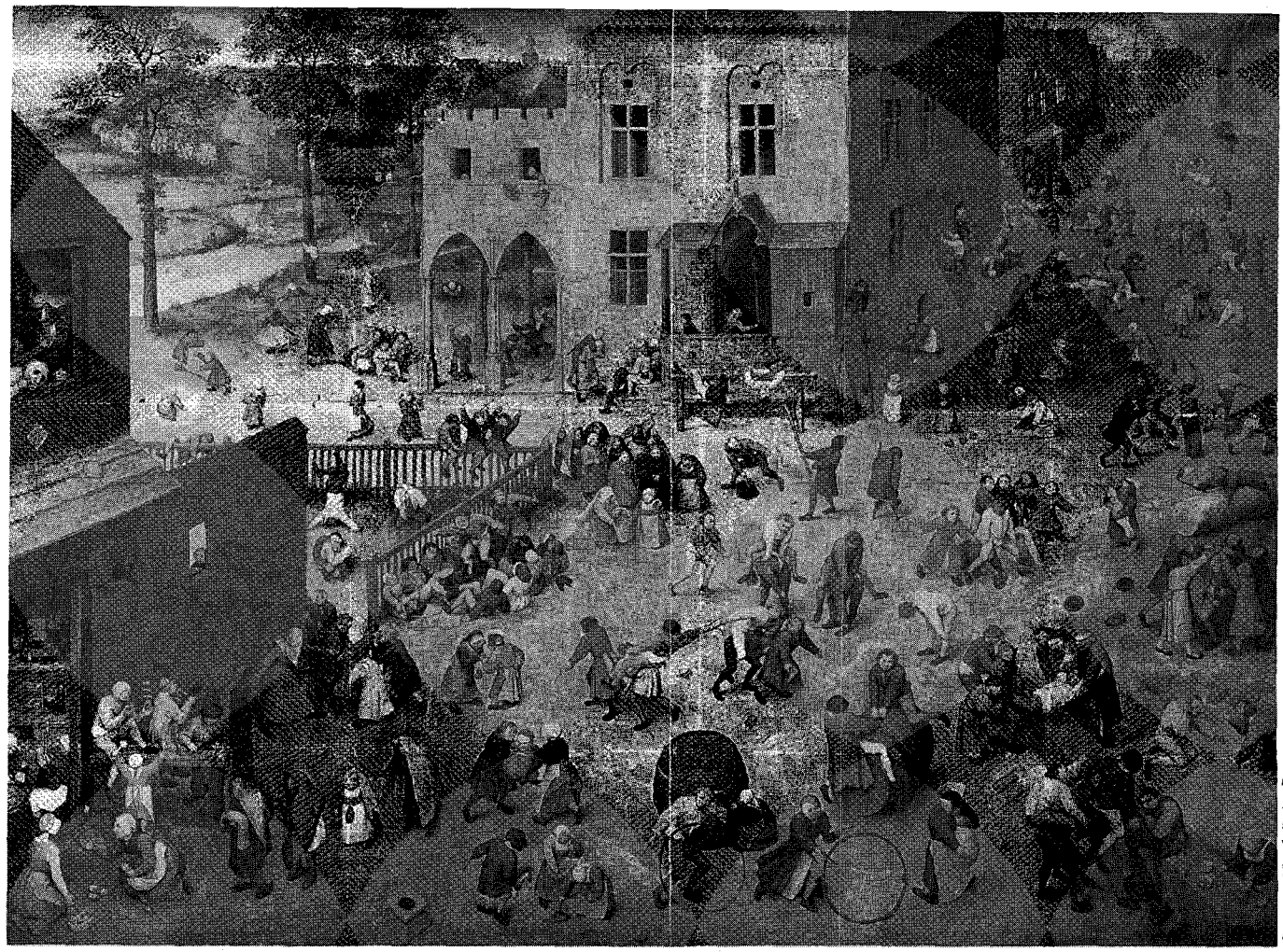

Courtesy North Point Press

PIETER BRUEGEL, *CHILDREN'S GAMES*, 1560

tured view is his own.

Principally, though, the accord felt among these pictures derives from the awesome consistency and certitude of Bruegel's art. Whether he conjures the Tower of Babel piercing the clouds or portrays ordinary herdsmen on a homeward drive, Bruegel represents the same vast, vertiginous world peopled by the same credible humanity. Bruegel's landscapes and figures still strike us today as preternaturally natural, and therefore as somehow unencumbered by the particularities of history, custom, and plot that they so scrupulously record. This makes Bruegel among the most modern and accessible of the old masters. A portraitist of the people, he also remains a truly popular artist. This explains the huge crowds that jam the Bruegel room in summer. And since Vienna has fitted the room with an exceedingly intrusive alarm system, which resounds whenever anyone so much as leans slightly forward to look more closely at the pictures, these crowds eye Bruegel's images with a mixture of sheepishness and rebellion.

All public sites of high culture have a fun-fair aspect to them; but in the case of Bruegel, this bathos begins in the pictures themselves. Already there the realms of natural and artistic splendor have been invaded by a motley but engrossing humanity, a social body absorbed in its trivial pursuits. Bruegel's pictures brilliantly manage the cacophony about them, immersing it into their own all-encompassing tableaux. Indeed, the longer one stands in the Vienna gallery, the more the bells seem like carnival pranks mocking the twin gestures of aesthetic experience: looking closely and pointing to explain.

Edward Snow has spent a long time in front of one of Bruegel's pictures in Vienna, the great *Children's Games* of 1560. *Inside Bruegel* is an interpretation of that single work, sustained through fifteen densely argued chapters. A professor of English at Rice University and an accomplished translator of Rilke, Snow began publishing on art some twenty years ago, in a monograph on Vermeer, another absorbing master from the Low Countries. In his new book, as in *A Study of Vermeer* (1979), Snow practices an art history based on the subjective experience of individual images and dependent for its success on the acuity with which that experience is described.

Snow's mix of hard looking and good writing is extremely rare in professional art history today. Although belletrism thrives in writing on contemporary art, and although the art history papers of students abound in effusive descriptions, a carefully crafted account of an artwork's effect, of how a picture means rather than what a picture means, is very rare. This is partly because such accounts have often turned out to be trivial or implausible. Snow succeeds because he uses the evidence of his experience judiciously, and because he tests whether that experience reflects himself or his object, and because he writes with exceptional lucidity and style. If older art needs more analysis of this sort, as I believe it does, then it pays to observe how Snow does it, and to pinpoint what his approach reveals about Bruegel that more narrowly historical critics before him were unable to see.

Snow takes one of his mottos from Nabokov: "Caress the details, the divine details." As the book's title suggests, *Inside Bruegel* begins and ends with

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minute internal details, with episodes compacted in episodes within *Children's Games*. Although Snow occasionally draws on the picture's overall perspective to make his point about a detail, his focus is way up close to the picture's surface. The book's format suits this intimate perspective. The entirety of *Children's Games* is reproduced in a color foldout frontispiece, but the bulk of the book's subsequent illustrations—there are 151 of them—are small-scale black-and-white details, which are repeated whenever the text demands. The full view thus functions rather like a map.

This is entirely appropriate, for experience in Bruegel, as Snow describes it, is as it is in the world: already in the middle of things, never at the center, always restless. Bruegel painted his picture to reward what Snow calls "thinking one's way into the particulars." He designated most of the surface of his panel as spacious horizontal extensions seen from high above—a town square, a flat stretch of countryside, and a broad street receding into the distance. He populated these places with some 230 children playing 90 different games.

Most viewers spend their time trying to identify the individual contests. Once recognized as tug-of-war, blindman's bluff, king of the castle, and so forth, what at first seemed senseless or surreal turns out to be motivated and familiar. Naming what the children play is indeed the picture's principal game. To participate in the picture, viewers draw on memories from childhood, when they knew how games were played; but since the scope of Bruegel's picture exceeds a modern viewer's personal experience of street play, and since some of the games depicted are extinct, viewing becomes an instruction in the untutored pastimes of a yet more distant past.

Children's Games elicits nostalgia for both the historical past and the personal past. It evokes childhood as a remote era, before the advent of mandatory schooling and the nuclear family, when children constituted a barely supervised collectivity possessing its own social repertoire. It is unclear whether Bruegel himself stood on our side of those vanished centuries of childhood; whether, like some archaic Jacques Tati, he already equated maturity with the trauma of modernity and set these against the historical disappearance of pre-modern childhood and contentment. The project of constructing learned compendia of children's games—it was shared by Bruegel's contemporaries Rabelais and Froissart—suggests at least a consciousness of distance. Anyway, the question of Bruegel's modernity, and of his stance toward the seeming "primitives" he portrays, takes us to the very heart of his oeuvre: his paintings and his prints of festive peasants.

Snow stands oddly aloof from the naming game that dominates the popular reception (as well as the learned reception) of Bruegel's extraordinary picture. He is content to rely on previous scholarship for the identity of individual games. In one instance his intuition contradicts the established view, and he sees a game usually called "pulling hair" as having something to do with oratory; but here his arguments are strained, perhaps because a proper renaming of the activity would require an arsenal of historical learning that Snow, seeking to interpret the picture from within, is at pains not to deploy. But Bruegel's picture itself is as erudite as it is down-to-earth, and so Snow's insistence on interpretive immediacy obscures the pedantic pleasures for which the picture was also intended.

Placing himself at a remove from the games of the children and the scholars, Snow discerns in Bruegel's players a resistance akin to his own. The details over which he lingers are the incidental nuances and the parenthetical intrigues, each a miniature of the human condition, that play within, across, and against the plot of the games themselves: subtle differences between innocence and experience among children at play; the certitude, the curiosity, the violence, or the ecstasy that variously attend a single endeavor; in sum, how a child plays, not what a child plays.

In one of his best passages, Snow finds the condition of childhood itself in one moment of play. In the game of covering and uncovering, a tall girl draws her apron over youngsters nestled in a group. As usual, leaving the actual mechanics of the game unexplained, Snow discerns a subtle division between a little girl who sits happily under the apron and two uncovered, older boys. While such a division, like any moment in the game, is presumably a product of chance, Bruegel collates the difference between covered and uncovered with the contrast of youth and age. The picturesque distinction that he draws between the cloaked toddler and the exposed, pre-adolescent boys is not a conscious attitude held by the players, since all participate with equal relish. As Snow observes, it is rather "a difference imposed by the body," as by chance or fate: "It seems only a matter of time ... until the boys split off from the group and become part of the hyperactive, strictly male games in whose direction they are pointed. They, unlike the girl, are already outside the covering sphere the apron provides. Yet they linger past their time, still happily susceptible to the feeling of being under it; and this itself seems a gentle sort of grace." The heart of Snow's enterprise lies in passages such as this one, in which description climaxes gently in multiple interpretations.

Snow accomplishes this shift through two intertwined devices. He abstracts what he describes by adding, as if for emphasis, a key metaphor—the apron as "covering sphere," for example—and once in place the metaphor inflects and illuminates everything it touches, from the game itself to the composition of the painting as a whole. And then Snow qualifies this inflection as a surmise: "it seems only a matter of time," "this itself seems ... grace." Allegory thus becomes contingent on the viewer's subjective experience of the picture, while conversely the picture, by a magic that is also Bruegel's, becomes a mirror of lived experience. Indeed, at the same time as he interprets what some scene in *Children's Games* might mean, Snow obscures the distinction between that interpretation and what he could say if he observed that scene in reality, as, say, an event witnessed from the window of his study. Indeed, everything in the passage about the covering game could just as well have been written about life, had the girl's apron, in a live version of the game, been observed to settle on the toddler and not on the boys.

Snow's account of the covering game appears in the book's final chapter, entitled "Assurance." Like most of the titles in the second half of *Inside Bruegel*, "Assurance" stands for a condition rather than a theme. It names the circumstances of the artist's subject rather than that subject itself. Defined by Snow as "the existence of a 'prior' dimension where things abide," assurance is rare in *Children's Games*, where everything is literally in play. Within this tumult, the girl under the apron stands for assurance: "She is positioned there in a kind of Bruegelian state, her separateness ... still an outgrowth of community and her gaze ... securely grounded, facing outward toward an open world that seems to come in, unresisted, through innocent and delighted eyes."

Snow concludes with this idyll in order to contrast it with the picture as a whole, which refuses any concluding assurances, and any conclusions at all. True to the task of remaining "inside," Snow ends his book where he began it, in the middle of things: "In an important sense there exists no 'painting as a whole,' if by that we mean something

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that frames, sums up, and holds in place its various details." More than any human condition, then, assurance—existential or interpretive—appears in a state of suspension in Bruegel, which is hardly assuring. Snow plays assurance and suspension against each other by finding motifs of the one nestled in the other: the assurance of a suspended apron, of a delayed adulthood, and, by extension, of Snow's own reading, even where it seems to stick.

Inconclusiveness, or what Snow calls "endlessly proliferating semiosis," is the painting's condition. "No sustained investigation of the painting can hope to reach summarizable conclusions," Snow warns in his opening pages. There is something paradoxically final, and reassuring, about these disclaimers against closure, as if the painting's refusal to be about any one thing becomes the thing that the painting is about. "The painting's 'aboutness,'" cautions Snow, "can be made manifest, but only as the tacit dimension of an inquiry that keeps producing what Blake calls 'particular knowledge.'" Yet Snow sometimes intimates that his incomplete interpretation is nothing less than that manifestation of the picture as a whole, as when he imagines that *Children's Games* mirrors adequately its historical exposition: "History in Northern Europe in 1560 was a shifting field of intellectual and emotional conflicts that if mapped would look much like the chaotic scene which the painting itself depicts." This overarching fantasy of a perfect fit between method and material belies the condition of playful indeterminacy that Snow celebrates in Bruegel, and that his book seeks mimetically to reproduce.

II.

Is there really nothing in Bruegel's picture "that frames, sums up, and holds in place the various details"? Bruegel situates his picture's viewpoint high above the ground, observing details not from their midst but at an ordering remove, so that scores of games, and many more internal plots, can be framed in a single view. Nor does this encyclopedic all-inclusiveness compromise the perfect integrity of Bruegel's "painting as a whole." Viewers certainly may be delighted to view the picture from up close, but when they step back they will recover a remarkably stable world. Bruegel combines landscape, cityscape, and cultural compendium within a unified perspective, bathing his tableau in a single light, with the brown, blue, green, and earthy red in patterned agreement. Painters especially admire *Children's Games* for its mastery of abstract geometric forms. Hats, hoops, potties, barrels, bricks, aprons, and windows, painted as if strewn on the picture plane, become perfect circles, cylinders, and squares that absorb the chaos of particulars into a serene if inhuman order.

By virtue of their empyrean perspective, and of the dizzying copiousness of the view that they embrace, Bruegel's pictures were given the term "worldscapes" by art historians early in this century. Since his worldscapes place their viewer not in the world but above it, the descent into particulars maintains a certain detachment. Wherever we look we enter, through details and anecdotes, into an experience of being in that world, as if the terrain stretching before us were an experience park. But the picture's own viewpoint remains more capacious than ordinary experience. Simultaneously landscape and map, Bruegel's paintings endow sight with the proportions of the world.

Already in the sixteenth century, viewers admired the interplay between detail and whole in Bruegel's art. The great Antwerp cartographer Abraham Ortelius, who was Bruegel's friend and public champion, compared maps to landscapes, and took both to be technologies that placed particulars in a total framework. Such techniques indicated man's special place within the cosmos, as the measure of all things. "As the figure of the whole orb of the earth appears to our gaze," states Ortelius in a cartouche on his world map, "so philosophy should show itself in its totality." And in another inscription, he instructed: "The horse is created in order to pull and carry; the ox, to plow; the dog, to keep watch and hunt. Man, however, was born in order to contemplate the world in his gaze." To Ortelius, the mental distance achieved by his landscapes betokened the philosophical (specifically, the Stoic) perspective appropriate to a genuine humanity, the perspective momentously cultivated by humanism.

Snow's close-up focus, combined with his lack of interest in Bruegel's work as erudite compiler, obscures this dimension of *Children's Games*. But it also serves as a necessary corrective to a scholarly literature on Bruegel that has become virtually blind to what his pictures look like. Against an art history obsessed by "historical context," Snow restores looking—what he calls a "willingness to credit what one finds inside images"—as the entrance into paintings. In doing so, he also gives scholarship a popular perspective on the artist, one closer to what tourists—like Bruegel's patrons—enjoy about *Children's Games*.

Bruegel was a contradictory figure already in his own day. He was "Peasant Bruegel," a naïve painter indigenous to the rustic culture he portrayed. Writing in 1604, Karel van Mander called him "Pieter the Droll," and placed his birth "among peasants in an obscure village in Brabant," and praised him as "chosen by Nature from among the peasants to represent the peasants." According to van Mander, nobody could glance at Bruegel's paintings without instantly bursting into laughter, which confirms the felt immediacy of their appeal. Later centuries, and perhaps even Bruegel's contemporaries, measured his unique style against the elegant manner of other Antwerp painters, such as Frans Floris, and judged it to be as peculiarly rustic as he was. Until the end of the last century, Bruegel was classed as a folk painter, an ethnographic curiosity rather than an exponent of ethnographic curiosity.

Yet Bruegel's clients were anything but rustic. By the time of his death, his circle included Antwerp's leading merchants, scholars, and intellectuals—at a time when Antwerp was a cultural capital of Europe. Already by the 1590s, nearly all Bruegel's paintings had arrived in the collection of Emperor Rudolf II of Habsburg, from whom much of the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna derives. An old anecdote encapsulates Bruegel's status as outsider relative to the subjects that he depicts. Van Mander recounts that Bruegel, in the company of a "wealthy and noble" friend, "often went on trips among the peasants, to their weddings and fairs. The two dressed like peasants, brought gifts like the other guests, and acted as if they belonged to the families or acquaintances of the bride or groom. Here Bruegel delighted in observing the customs of the peasants in eating, drinking, dancing, jumping, and love-making, all of which he knew how to copy in color very comically and skillfully." So Bruegel recaptured nature only by means of hidden artifice. He observed and copied peasants by masquerading as the rustic that he no longer was. Yet van Mander seeks by this anecdote to praise Bruegel's naturalism, his authenticity as an artist who paints his subject—in the language of the time—"after life."

Bruegel raises the difficult historical question of whether his naturalness, which the nineteenth century took to be genuine naïveté, was in fact a self-conscious style. Was he a primitivist or a primitive? David Freedberg has unearthed evidence that Bruegel regarded his art as a vernacular alternative to the over-refined Italianism of his fellow

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Antwerp painters. In a text by Lucas d'Heere, a Flemish champion of Italianism, "a certain painter" had mocked his rivals' products as "sugary little pictures," and criticized their superfluous ornament. In answer, d'Heere calls this unnamed detractor a "botcher" and a "foolish oaf" whose paintings look like "carnival dolls." Freedberg argues that d'Heere aimed these barbs at Pieter Bruegel. If so, this casts light on an important detail in *Children's Games*. At the lower left of the picture, two girls play dolls with figures that look uncannily like themselves. The simplified shape of Bruegel's children (like "carnival dolls") thus may be an attempt to bring his artifice in line with their artifice, to represent the "primitive" Other not only in its pastimes but also in its indigenous style.

In the early decades of our century, when Bruegel's pictures were resurrected as the highest form of art, scholars reflected deeply on whether the artist was naïve or sentimental. Unhappy with the myth of "Peasant Bruegel," but conscious of his unique accessibility, they sought to understand the original cultural ground upon which his modern immediacy might be based. In 1934, in what remains the richest reading of the artist, Hans Sedlmayr discerned two perspectives coexistent in Bruegel's art but indicative of different audiences. One focused on comic anecdote and the human figure, and aligned itself with the laughter of "the people." The other sought effects of spacing, landscape, and pictorial structure, and fit an elite anxious to preserve its distancing. Thus Bruegel could seem familiar or alienating, tolerant or cruel, simple or mannerist, depending on which of these two perspectives one chose to assume.

III.

Over the last fifty years, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the elite aspects of Bruegel's art: its learned iconography, its privileged patronage, its allegedly authoritarian tenor. This has resulted in some of the most disappointing writing in the discipline of art history. Remarkably oblivious to the features that make Bruegel great, this scholarship became an excuse for unloading historical information in the name of "context." Thus, for instance, Bruegel's awesome landscapes would instantly occasion potted summaries of property law in Antwerp in 1560, as if rules of ownership were what the picture's patron paid to enjoy.

For this reason, Snow does the field a great service by discerning the likeness between what contextualists see in the artist and what they claim for their own work. He notes their peculiar fascination with Bruegel's images of cruelty, which they invariably interpret as positive statements that signal the painter's allegiance to the people in power. The hints of irony that abound in this greatest comic painter of the Renaissance are dismissed as anachronistic projections of modern sensibility. One influential scholar even asserted that in Bruegel's time "there was nothing problematic about the enforcement of the law's judgments."

Snow replies that, for a start, dissent thrived in the sixteenth century. The dilemma of authority was the great theme of the age. Snow observes, moreover, that the historians' "denial [of history] in almost the Freudian sense" results from arguing their own authority through an imaginary authoritarianism in Bruegel: "Authority ... manifest[s] itself as an anxious aversion to the image." I would add that historians habitually prove their tough-mindedness by looking the cruelties of the past coldly in the eye; but a cold eye is oblivious to art. It is striking how steeled art historians make themselves against the warmth radiating from their subject. Snow is one of the rare scholars who lets on that he loves what he studies.

It would be foolish, though, to blame the woes of Bruegel scholars on their historical perspective. Around 1980, the artist was compellingly analyzed by scholars informed precisely by new historical emphases. Interest in popular culture, in history written "from below," reenergized the study of early modern Europe. Simultaneously alien and familiar, the era lent itself to a collaboration between history and anthropology; indeed, anthropology had its historical origins here, in the culture of Montaigne, Bodin, and Bruegel. And rediscovered work on Rabelais by Mikhail Bakhtin provided an intellectually resonant model of the features of popular culture that are omnipresent in Bruegel.

A renaissance of Bruegel studies began with the work of Svetlana Alpers. In an important article in 1973 on festive peasants, Alpers understood Bruegel as painting in a "comic mode," in which peasants could simultaneously be mocked, celebrated, and envied. Drawing on the literature, the politics, and the economics of the time, but listening closely to the actual pulse of the pictures, she retrieved for historical scholarship what was distinctive about the artist. And the fierce debate that ensued between Alpers and her (mainly Dutch) detractors reads like a latter-day battle between Carnival and Lent.

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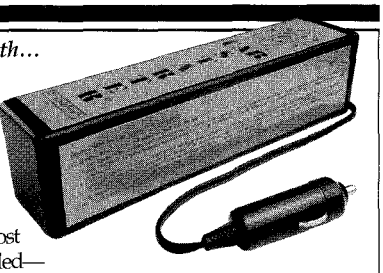

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The argument hinged on whether Bruegel simply vilified peasants as sinful, or took a more positive or varied attitude. Alpers's Lenten opponents believed that Bruegel's peasants elicited nothing but scorn from their elite audience, and they defended a methodological preference for texts over images as historical evidence. Alpers's carnivalesque reading, by contrast, was prepared to take into account the immediate, present-day experience of Bruegel's pictures. From this standpoint, festival appeared like an inviting spectacle. Although most published work on Bruegel today still labors under the Lenten regime, Alpers made scholarship on this artist relevant again to his art.

Snow first published on *Children's Games* in 1983, in a much-admired article in the second issue of *Representations*, an innovative journal co-founded by Alpers. In developing his argument into a book, Snow has engaged usefully with previous scholarship on Bruegel, which has meant bolstering his original intuitions with historical evidence. "Historical context became crucial," writes Snow, "both as an area of responsibility and as an issue to be addressed." By "issue," Snow means that context is never simply the solution to the puzzle of a primary text. Properly analyzed in its own inherent complexity, context is simply more text. It may even require that the primary text, in this case Bruegel's pictures, be invoked to decipher *it*. Snow's detour through early modern attitudes toward children becomes his best weapon against naïvely contextualist scholars who would accuse him of anachronistic overreading. He demonstrates the obvious, that childhood had as many different meanings in Bruegel's wider culture as it seems to have in Bruegel's picture.

Historical context does not impede interpretation. It is where interpretation begins, especially in Bruegel, who habitually compiles heterogeneous materials without adjudicating between them. "The argument between the ironic and the non-ironic," writes Snow, on the difficult issue of Bruegel's tone, "is largely a matter of predisposition and ... can never be settled outside the circle of interpretation, regardless of the weight of evidence asserted on either side." This argument would have been weaker had Snow not also located open-endedness as a value in the art and the literature of the time. Like his contemporaries Erasmus, Rabelais, and Montaigne, and as an understandable response to the ideological division during the great wars of religion, Bruegel organized contradictions as paradox. He was fascinated with the ways in which contradictions "could be both manipulated as a language and embodied, lived through, and articulated from within."

Snow is not the first to place Bruegel in the tradition of paradoxicalism that flourished in northern Europe during the sixteenth century. His contribution consists, rather, in what he goes on to do with the artist once he has established him as a paradoxicalist. If the meanings of *Children's Games* were meant to be plural, if Bruegel intentionally combined them to mutually reinforce, qualify, and contradict one another, then scholars ought to enter this game. But this requires that they suspend their own discipline-based expectations of semantic and tonal consistency. To become more properly historical, that is, the study of Bruegel must become more hermeneutic. It must discover his work within the protracted, uncertain, and playful process of understanding for which it was made.

In a footnote, Snow reflects on the reductiveness of art historians writing on Bruegel. Citing a speech in *Coriolanus*, in which a character describes child's play in ways that make it seem to epitomize adulthood, Snow notes that nobody would assume that this epitome, whatever it might finally be understood as saying, directly expresses Shakespeare's own view, as if literary interpretation consists in citing texts rather than in reading them. Yet this is precisely the habit of art historians. For them, evidence, and particularly evidence from texts, allows them to close their eyes. Snow does not speculate about why a discipline should have become so peculiarly allergic to its objects of study, but he stands amazed at the certitude with which they nonetheless blindly proceed: "Why should a mode of critical response so clearly inadequate to the workings of Shakespeare's language seem so unremarkable when applied to Bruegel's images?"

It will be interesting to see how Bruegel scholars respond to Snow's book. Many will choose to ignore it because its style and its pace are so different from their own. Art historians, especially outside America, still tend to adhere to what they take to be a scientific mode of exposition. Hypotheses are stated and verified, and clear conclusions are offered for readers to build upon or to reject. Snow proposes certain theses and mounts arguments in their defense. He holds that in Bruegel meanings are multiple, that sixteenth-century culture was particularly sensitized to this condition, and that the "play of images" discussed by his book was set in motion by the artist for a culture thus sensitized. He bolsters all these beliefs by adducing relevant historical and visual information. But finally Snow's interest lies less in defining what the picture historically was than in immersing his present readers in a specific quality of experience.

Snow seeks to reproduce the experience of the artwork by means of a literary treatment of his own response. And along the way he proves that such an immersion in experience also clears up the scholarly debates over the meaning of certain pictures. By detailing how *Children's Games* means, Snow gives future scholars a good idea of what their interpretations ought to look like. The problem is that much of the recent work on Bruegel is no longer about meaning. Contemporary scholars attend more to the material conditions of production, to how, why, and for whom Bruegel's pictures were made. Snow's silence on matters of patronage, the market, and period tastes and receptions may alienate readers who would otherwise agree with most of his views. For this reason, too, *Inside Bruegel* should be required reading for anyone working on any aspect of the artist's iconography.

IV.

Still, I am not sure whether, even from the viewpoint of experience, Bruegel is best approached as a puzzle about meaning. As Mark Meadow has recently argued, Bruegel's pictorial compendia may have been made as exercises of memory, not of interpretation. Snow tends to treat everything in *Children's Games* as if it somehow contributed to some story, message, or idea. He establishes the artist as a great and modern poet of the human condition. Yet Bruegel's distinctive achievements lie in how he subsumes anecdote and even naturalism into a uniquely pictorial expression: the inhuman logic of a plane surface structured by paint.

A walk through the adjacent rooms in Vienna reveals that several other late sixteenth-century Netherlandish masters painted pictures akin to Bruegel's in subject and plot. Yet somehow a book-length interpretation of, say, a peasant scene by Lucas van Valkenborch seems altogether out of place. This is owed not to its semiosis, which may be as "proliferating" as Bruegel's, but to the look of the picture, to its lack of formal gravity. This is what Cézanne meant by "thinking in images": not, as Snow has it, the quasi-narrative work of "binding superficially unrelated incidents into elaborate structures of intent," but rather the subsumption of intention itself in the element of pure structure.

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Snow calls his approach "close reading." Close readings are what literary scholars ordinarily do and teach. They are analyses of texts (most typically, of poems) fine-tuned to the aural and semantic nuances of language. Their closest parallel in art history is formal analysis. As Snow's book demonstrates, however, close reading is usually more attentive to meaning than to form. Snow says nothing about format, color, brushwork, or figure style in *Children's Games*; and his few sentences about the picture's perspective and design serve to harness these into an argument about plot and meaning.

There exists today no commonly accepted practice of close reading for pictures. This makes them particularly hard to discuss with students who, with no previous knowledge of the poetry, can speak with eloquence on a line or two of Wordsworth, but have great difficulty saying anything sensible about a similarly accessible painter. With literature, they are adept at analyzing what and how they read. With pictures, they become disoriented, either voicing vague personal associations ("it makes me think of my uncle's stuffy old house") or reciting the few facts they know ("Antwerp was a trade capital of Europe"). Education in art history consists largely in silencing personal association and expanding a repertoire of relevant facts. Discovering historical contexts for works of art is what a course in art history today teaches students to do. What use this skill has outside the classroom is anyone's guess.

Snow writes at a time when the study of literature, too, has become more contextual, when texts are deciphered for what they reflect about their historical conditions. Perhaps in response to this, but certainly in response to the routines of art history, Snow reasserts the value of close reading: "I must confess that it seems to me not obsolescent but vital and endangered—a meditative activity that is also political in the deepest sense. Political, that is, in its holding out against the mandates in culture that would hasten its demise." In Snow, close reading is also political, in the sense that it embodies an empathetic sociability. Writing at a deliberately slow pace that keeps him intimate with his material, and claiming for himself no final word, Snow attempts to recover for criticism the cautious pluralism that he finds in Bruegel. This is an admirable endeavor. For the hardest thing to teach about earlier art, and the most essential thing, is how to slow experience down. A single book about a single painting, and the fruit of nearly twenty years of labor, *Inside Bruegel* exemplifies the value of "slow reading." "Deep down," writes Snow, "we are all friends of *lento*."

From another perspective, though, Snow's work is unusually apolitical. The stories that he reads in Bruegel are about the givens of the human condition, the irreducibles of love, pleasure, death, and pain that politics can affect but never efface. This distinguishes him from the many social historians drawn to Bruegel's art. In their work, all conditions of interaction among persons are revealed to be social constructions amenable to change for better or worse. Politics becomes the logical consequence of attending to the social—to the extent that, in this century, the only artists whom critics label as "social" are those who seek radical change. By focusing on Bruegel's image of children at play, however, Snow discerns what seem to be the natural, or pre-social, conditions of society. It is

Eurydice in Istanbul

What was there to complain of,
but that she had been loved?
—Ovid

1.

In the city that had died twice
and been condemned to life once more,

the best rooms were booked. Garbo, Mata Hari,
the one-legged Sarah Bernhardt, Atatürk—

the dead were back at the Pera Palas.
There, up under the roof, I lay.

All over town *muezzin* competed for my soul.
The tap dripped in the sink, the foul waters

of forgetfulness urging me to drink.
Love, lie down with me. Charm this old rock.

2.

Under a men's club you found the underworld.
The man in the sharp suit who kept the door

led the way in the dark. He turned on a light.
The dark swallowed it. Down the stairs,

down to the cavernous Byzantine cistern,
he seemed to float. Was I to follow?

On a shaky step, I hugged the wall.
Taking the puddles in his fine shoes,

he led you on where I held back.
How could he not be shade or god?

Your whistling drifted in and out of tune,
the pillars ready to follow you back to the world,

so many trees, so many stones.
Your shadow stretched the length of a column.

It lay in the mud as if to await the boatman,
the one the old guidebooks mention—

and then there you were again, face half aglow,
half lost. My heart emptied a chamber

by flooding another. *Let go*, it said,
through my hand, to the wall. *Let go.*

DEBORA GREGER

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refreshing to read a book that, by way of a painting that still speaks immediately to modern viewers, reminds criticism of the things that cannot be changed.

But is Bruegel, as his earliest biographers had it, a force of nature rather than a force of culture? *Children's Games* is one of Bruegel's three encyclopedic tableaux. Together with *Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559) and *The Battle of Carnival and Lent* (1559), it forms a trilogy articulating the artifacts of language, custom, and play, respectively. With astonishing prescience, Bruegel articulates, in just three paintings, the whole sphere of what anthropology has taught us to call "culture." In each case, the artifacts that he compiles in his picture are placed in a complicated relation to the artistry constituted by his picture. Observing language, custom, and play from outside, Bruegel reveals that, even for those who stand closest to nature—for children, for peasants—these are contingent human fabrications. Since Bruegel can reveal fabrication as such, however, his art itself seems wholly natural, a flawless mirror of the seams of artifice.

In *Carnival and Lent*, Bruegel's naturalism allows us to see the simple objects from which the festive dress is pieced together: cups, shovels, pretzels, brooms, waffles. This indicates not only that the costumes are home-made. By an extension that would have come easily during the wars of religion, when beliefs and practices generally proved to be human contingencies, it also indicates that the customs themselves are home-made, too. With their makeshift props, the personifications of feasting and fasting are disclosed as the productions of the peasantry, not as the productions of the painter. Painted fully as artifice, the culture of the aboriginal Other—children, peasants—conceals the artifice of which the painting is made. So Bruegel may be like life, and interpreting him closely may seem like entering into the nature of immediate experience; but this is only because of his comprehensive citation of a more naïve or "natural" culture that, under Bruegel's own scrutiny, proves to be made, not found. Snow movingly demonstrates what still can be learned if one is willing "to credit what one finds inside images." Yet Bruegel is the first artist to show that such credence is, like childhood, forever past.

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Puff Daddy

BY RICHARD JENKYNS

A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1751–1816 by Fintan O'Toole

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 519 pp., $30)

Benjamin Disraeli stands as the great example of a politician who was also a writer. He wrote twelve novels, a biography, and a number of other miscellaneous works; and most of his political life was spent in opposition. Since he served for six years as Prime Minister, we think of him as a statesman with a creative sideline, rather than the other way round. But it could easily have been Richard Brinsley Sheridan who assumed that role—or at least he might have seemed destined to it at the middle of his life.

Sheridan wrote much less than Disraeli. Most of his literary work, including the three plays by which he is now remembered, was done before he was thirty; and whereas Disraeli wrote some of his best books after he had occupied high public position, Sheridan devoted almost all the rest of his career to politics (with a sideline in theatrical management), except for the tragedy *Pizarro*, long forgotten. In his early thirties, when he had already tasted the first fruits of power as undersecretary for foreign affairs and then secretary to the Treasury, he looked likely to rise higher still, as Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, conceivably even Prime Minister. It was not to be; indeed, he was never to hold office again at all, except for a brief period in 1806–7, in the middle-ranking post of Treasurer of the Navy. Until near the end, he remained a prominent and in a way important player on the political stage, as an orator, an assiduous intriguer, and an influential voice. He backed several good losing causes eloquently and honorably, but his career was almost entirely barren of substantial political achievement.

His early success was indeed dazzling. Sheridan was born in Dublin in 1751. His mother was the daughter of a Church of Ireland (that is, Protestant) clergyman. His father was a theatrical manager, who also had pretensions to scholarship in the theory of elocution and rhetoric. When Sheridan was seven years old, his father moved to England, and he never set eyes on his native land again. Socially, Sheridan is difficult to place. With Church of Ireland clergy on both sides of his family, including a dean and a bishop, he must always have been reckoned a gentleman, but the theater was equivocally viewed. His father sent him to Harrow, one of the grandest schools in the country, and he seems from the first to have mixed easily with the nobility and with royalty. He was evidently excellent company and enormously charming. In mid-life he also managed to buy an exceptionally beautiful estate not far from London. (It is where the present Queen Mother spent her honeymoon.)

Even before his first stage success, the romance of his own life had made Sheridan a celebrity. Miss Elizabeth Linley, one of the finest singers and greatest beauties of her day (many thought her the most beautiful of them all), was being harassed by a certain Major Mathews. Sheridan whisked her away from her home in Bath to France, married her there, and returned to fight a couple of duels with the importunate Mathews, in the second of which he was wounded. The Sheridans became the most glamorous couple of the time.

His first play, *The Rivals*, which appeared in 1775, is an example of what is often called artificial comedy. There is a pair of lovers, the handsome Jack Absolute and the sentimental Lydia Languish, a semi-buffoonish rival suitor, the prospect of an elopement, a duel, and various other complications. All good theatrical nonsense—except that, as Fintan O'Toole points out in his vivid book, it was based on Sheridan's own experience; the piece is even set in Bath, where the drama of Mathews and Miss Linley, half romantic, half absurd, had been played out. At this time Sheridan's life was indeed the stuff of fantasy.

The Rivals also has a rich cast of secondary characters. There is Jack's choleric father Sir Anthony Absolute, the hot-tempered, blustering Irishman Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and, best known of all, Mrs. Malaprop, whose massacrings of the English language ("an allegory on the banks of the Nile," and so on) gave it a new word. In her most famous sequence

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of malapropisms, she declares: "If I reprehend anything in the world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!" There are times when the obvious should not be avoided, and "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs" is, very fittingly, the title of O'Toole's last chapter. (He has a gift for chapter titles.)

The Rivals was followed in the same year by *The Duenna*, Sheridan's text for a comic opera, enormously successful in its own day. Then came his masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*, in 1777. O'Toole tells us that its two main plotlines were derived from the drafts of two separate plays that Sheridan subsequently abandoned, but they are so artfully combined that one would scarcely guess it. The first plot concerns the unhappy marriage of Sir Peter Teazle to a much younger wife and how they eventually come to appreciate each other's merits. (In the Royal Shakespeare Company's current production, Lady Teazle, a country girl who has married for money and rank, is given an Irish accent—a tribute to Sheridan's origins, though not a part of his own conception.) The other plot revolves around the Surface brothers, Joseph, the pattern of virtue who turns out to be a hypocrite and villain, and Charles, the dissolute scapegrace who proves to have a heart of gold.

The play includes two famous set-pieces. In the first of them Charles Surface, whose dissipations have left him broke, auctions off the family portraits, with various disrespectful asides about his ancestry. Will he sell the picture of his uncle and benefactor, who unknown to him is present at the auction, and thus ruin forever his chances of having enough money to marry the fair Maria? The tension is wound up and up. In the most famous scene of all, Lady Teazle is hidden behind a screen in circumstances which would seem to show, if she is discovered, that she is adulterously involved with Joseph Surface. Will she be found? And what will happen when she is found? Here farce and the comedy of manners meet in a scene that Sheridan handles with consummate adroitness.

At the edge of the play's action is a cluster of minor figures. Snake, Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite: the names alone are sufficient to show that they represent the malice and the corruption of society. The most cunning of them spread their poison with a subtlety that lures us, wickedly, into half-joining their side. "She wants that delicacy of tint," says Snake of a cruder tittle-tattler, "and mellowness of sneer, which distinguish your ladyship's

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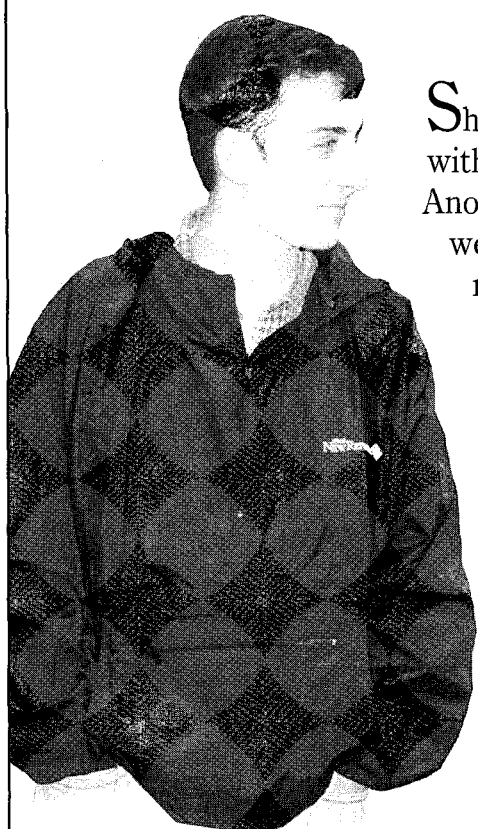

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scandal." The epigrams are batted back and forth in a way which may remind us of Oscar Wilde's plays, though they are better integrated into the story than most of Wilde's (always excepting *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a rather different kind of play from the rest). "I'll swear her colour is natural," Mrs. Candour remarks, "—I have seen it come and go." And Lady Teazle interrupts, "I dare swear you have ma'am; it goes of a night and comes again in the morning."

The last of Sheridan's comedies, *The Critic*, is much less well constructed than its predecessors, but for bedside reading it is as good as any of them. The main action is a rehearsal of Mr. Puff's new tragedy, with sarcastic comments from the onlookers, a device that Sheridan borrowed from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is not quite the best Shakespearean burlesque in the language—that honor must go to *Savonarola*, by L. Brown (that is, Max Beerbohm)—but it runs close. (Unless indeed we remember the *Dream*, and conclude that the funniest parodist of Shakespeare was Shakespeare.)

Mr. Puff sets his scene in England's famed Elizabethan age, and the play mingles *Romeo and Juliet* with *Hamlet* as it tells the tragic story of the star-crossed love between the captive Spanish grandee Don Ferolo Whiskerandos and the beauteous Tilburina, charmingly named from the naval dockyards at Tilbury of which her father is governor. The Don is killed in a duel with a beefeater, spouting blank verse to the last:

> Captain, thou hast fenced well!
> And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene,
> For all eter-

"-nity—he would have added," explains the helpful beefeater. Tilburina then turns into Ophelia and enters "stark mad in white satin." ("O Lord, sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin.") And her attendant enters in white linen; even in extremis the social niceties must be observed.

Mr. Puff may not be a great tragedian, but he is a master of spin doctoring. Or, in his own words: "I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or, to speak more plainly, a professor of the art of puffing." Puffing, he explains, "is of various sorts; the principal are, the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral, the puff collusive, and the puff oblique, or puff by implication." The puff collusive is "the newest of any," this being the technique of selling a book by the pretense of hostility, telling the world first that it ought not to buy the book and second that everyone is doing so: "As there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion is a reproach to the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age." Well, the puff collusive has been used a good deal since its invention; and as for the other forms of puffery, we may well conclude, as politics becomes more and more a form of show business, that Puff's delicious guide to spinning is even more relevant now than it was in Sheridan's day.

O'Toole writes well about the plays, but his real interest is in Sheridan the politician. In two respects, O'Toole wants to alter our view of his subject. Sheridan was always to the left in British politics (if one may speak somewhat anachronistically), but O'Toole argues that he was not only radical in terms of the parliamentary spectrum, he was actually subversive, even revolutionary, and at moments treasonable. And O'Toole insists that Sheridan's experience was dominated by his Irishness. Apart from a Celtic bard or two, indeed, almost all the eminent Irishmen of the eighteenth century—Swift, Goldsmith, Grattan, Sheridan—were Protestants and from the "Englishry," or the Anglo-Irish ascendancy.

The most conspicuous if partial exception was Edmund Burke. Though he was a Protestant, his father had converted from Catholicism, from conviction or for the sake of his career or from a mixture of these motives. Six years ago Conor Cruise O'Brien produced a revelatory study of Burke called *The Great Melody*, which argued that this man, commonly regarded as having assimilated himself totally to English culture and values, was in fact deeply and importantly influenced by his Irish past and his Catholic ancestry throughout his career. O'Brien may have somewhat overstated his case, and his passion for his hero is so generous that he allows him to do virtually no wrong; but the book remains a brilliant performance, stripping the grime and the lichen from a figure that had become much encrusted with them. O'Toole aims to do much the same for Sheridan.

It is a gallant project, but I doubt whether it altogether succeeds. In *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, the best general history of the country, R.F. Foster barely feels the need to mention Sheridan, but he does observe in a footnote that "only in opposing the Union [between the British and Irish parliaments] did he admit his own Irish identification. Otherwise, he is unique in his ability to jettison Irishness." Hard though he has tried, O'Toole does not seem to have significantly undermined such a judgment. Perhaps he is aware himself that his thesis is faced with difficulties, because we find him forcing the evidence too hard right from the start. Thus he begins his first chapter, "The madman was, they said, a very acute scholar who had cracked his brain with too much study. Though Catholic and Irish as well as mad, he was allowed, as he went begging along the hills and lakes...." And so on. The aim, you see, is to conjure up an atmosphere of beguilingly wacky Celticism, a Yeatsian vision of wandering tinkers and wise lunatics in a wild and watery landscape.

And who is this madman? He turns out to be merely someone who once entered the house of a Protestant parson called Dennis Sheridan or O'Sheridan. O'Toole calls him Donnchadh O Sioradain, a Gaelic form of the name which, if I understand O'Toole correctly, may be deduced but is not attested. And who is this Dennis Sheridan? By reading O'Toole carefully you can eventually work out that his son was an "ancestor" (what kind of ancestor is not specified) of Richard Sheridan's grandfather. In fact, Dennis Sheridan was the playwright's great-great-grandfather, providing one-sixteenth of his gene pool. In other words, the only Gaelic connection that O'Toole can produce for Richard Sheridan at all is very remote.

By giving an enormous prominence to this one strain in Sheridan's ancestry and omitting the rest almost entirely, O'Toole is sweet-talking any reader who is not pretty alert into a substantially false impression, and he is surely well aware of it. The word that rises to the lips is blarn—but no, I must bite back the cliché. To be sure, the stereotypes can indeed be very tempting. Sheridan's wife once observed that he had "a little too much of the blood of the O'Sheridans of County Cavan in him," and O'Toole speaks of differing English and Irish elements in him. Yet it is hard to see that this makes much sense. Genealogically, Sheridan was likely to have been very predominantly English, and culturally he was wholly English.

O'Toole suggests that in adulthood Sheridan may have preserved an Irish intonation; but I think that there is no chance of that. (I myself spoke with a purely Australian accent on my seventh birthday and with a purely English one on my eighth, all unself-consciously.) In another place O'Toole wistfully allows that the adult Sheridan probably sounded like an Englishman. Probably? Sheridan at different moments called himself English and Irish, in both cases correctly; but he is Irish in much the

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same way that Bob Hope is English and Irving Berlin is Russian.

On one occasion Sheridan actually asserted his Englishness in contradistinction to Ireland: "I might pity the hardships of Ireland, but as an Englishman I could never suffer the enemy [the French] to obtain such a favourable point from which to direct their attack against our existence as a nation." And perhaps one may also feel that Sir Lucius O'Trigger in *The Rivals* is rather an Englishman's view of the Irish. As it happens, at the first performances it was regarded by the (English) audience as a libel on the Irish character, and Sheridan was forced to defend himself against the charge of calumny.

Ireland was especially prominent in British politics during the uprising of 1798, at the time of the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, and in connection with the issue of Catholic emancipation, on which there was intense debate in Sheridan's later years. He was active and passionate on these questions, but so he was on other great issues of his day, always on the radical side of the argument. On American policy, he backed the colonists against the British government. On India, he took part in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal, and made the greatest speech of his career—some thought it the greatest speech in British political history—on behalf of the Begums of Oudh, royal ladies who together with their eunuchs had allegedly been oppressed by Hastings. (Impeachment, if you were wondering, was an archaic process, long since obsolete; and the impeachment of Hastings used up a great deal of talented political energy, dragged on for far too much time, and resulted in an acquittal that had appeared inevitable long in advance.)

From the imperfect records of Sheridan's speech we may still collect some sense of its effect. He played the patriot's card cunningly by appealing at once to pride and to guilt:

> This was British justice! this was British humanity! Mr. Hastings ensures to the allies of the company, in the strongest terms, their prosperity and his protection; the former he secures by sending an army to plunder them of their wealth and desolate their soil! His protection is fraught with a similar security; like that of a vulture to a lamb; grappling in its vitals! thirsting for its blood! scaring off each petty kite that hovers round; and then, with an insulting perversion of terms, calling sacrifice *protection*!

He ended with a peroration in which he painted an image of Justice, a figure whose favorite attitude is "to stoop to the unfortunate; to hear their cry, and to help them; to rescue and relieve; to succour and to save." Then, with his own cry of "My Lords, I have done," he swooned back dramatically into the arms of Burke.

All this was noble in spirit, and very theatrical; but perhaps one may see some limits to Sheridan's radicalism. In the Hastings case, certainly, it was the mistreatment of great ladies and their court that stirred his eloquence. And support for the American rebels, from one point of view, was also an assertion that English gentlemen such as Washington and Jefferson should be allowed to live as they pleased, without officious interference. When it came to Ireland, though, Sheridan did insist, when others were thinking about ways of building up a Catholic middle class, that English policy must address the distress of the peasantry.

O'Toole has much to say about Sheridan's contacts with radical thinkers and agitators who were well to the left of anyone in Parliament, and with Irishmen who had engaged in subversion or revolutionary conspiracy. A good deal here has to be surmise—it is in the nature of the case—but it does seem that Sheridan had some sympathy with armed resistance in Ireland, and that he gave support and assistance to Irish fugitives and advanced English radicals who were in danger from the law. I suspect that he was an early example of the "no enemies on the left" phenomenon. It is harder to suppose that he had thought through any consistent scheme of drastically changing the order of things (and it is not altogether clear how strong a claim O'Toole himself wants to make here).

When he died, he was carried to his funeral in Westminster Abbey in a procession that included royal princes, dukes, earls, and any number of other peers. O'Toole sees this as the rich and powerful at last seizing control of the man whom they could not control in life. That is an odd way of looking at the matter, and psychologically quite untrue. To the grandees of English politics and society, Sheridan was essentially "one of us." He was not truly dangerous, and they knew it. They knew him better than we ever can.

This biography is not quite as lively as one might expect from a journalist of O'Toole's reputation, but there are plenty of good things in it (including a really brilliant chapter on the eighteenth-century theater). The project of reassessing Sheridan has been well worth undertaking, and O'Toole casts much light along the way. In the end, however, Sheridan remains baffling, an enigma. How far was he a deeply principled statesman, and how far an adventurer and intriguer who loved the arts of conspiracy for their own sake?

His character was indeed extremely mixed. He had a keen eye for injustice, and his instincts were generous. He seems to have been very kind with money—always a stern test of character—and to have been an excellent landlord, loved by his tenants. He was unkindly neglectful of his sad, delicate wife, though penitently tender to her when she lay on her deathbed. There seems to have been something essentially erratic about him. Even in that hard-drinking age, he was notorious for his love of the bottle: he was probably what we would call an alcoholic. At one time he is found sending anonymous pornographic letters to a former mistress and her friends. Sooner or later he quarreled with almost all his parliamentary allies, including the great Charles James Fox, the de facto leader of the more radical Whigs, and it is hard to think that everyone was out of step except him.

He lacked persistence. Whereas Burke fought to the end to convict Hastings, Sheridan clearly lost interest. His endless plottings were almost always unsuccessful, and not always attractive. He made friends with the Prince of Wales, later to become Prince Regent when his father George III descended into madness and, a few years after Sheridan's death, King George IV. Sheridan hoped to use the Prince to further his own agenda, but when the Prince attained the Regency, he did not prove the dupe that Sheridan had hoped. O'Toole sees this as a betrayal of Sheridan by the Prince, but surely this is to get the situation back to front. The Prince was his patron (indeed, since the establishment had found for him the job of receiver of the Duchy of Cornwall, he was technically a member of the Prince's household), and it is no part of a patron's duty to be manipulated by his protégé.

Sheridan's last years were sad. He declined into poverty, and like the charming, feckless Charles Surface he saw his possessions auctioned off. What he never lacked was courage. When the Drury Lane Theatre, on which he depended for an income, burned down in 1809, he stared financial ruin in the face, and his gaze did not falter. As he sat in the Piazza Coffee House watching the conflagration, he is said to have replied to someone who remarked on his composure, "a man may surely take a glass of wine by his own fireside."

RICHARD JENKYNS is a fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

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Nothing Is Lost

By Hillel Halkin

The Jew of New York by Ben Katchor

(Pantheon, 97 pp., $20)

In the back of the *Forward*, a lively Jewish weekly published in New York, sharing a page with book advertisements and a language columnist called Philologos, is a comic strip that I have followed for years. Not religiously, though. I have at times (like others of his admirers, I imagine) been irresistibly tempted to take the week off from Ben Katchor. The very appearance of his cartoon—which, when I first encountered it, was featuring a work called *Julius Knipl, Real Estate Photographer*, and is now running something entitled *The Cardboard Valise*—can make you want to turn the page. Dark and awash in shadows, with large blocks of dense text and square, totem-headed figures that resemble cigar-store Indians, it is about as visually enticing as an alley after dark.

An alley after dark—refuse-filled, in the deserted commercial district of an American city—is in fact a typical venue for Katchor, whose imagination pokes at garbage like a homeless street-dweller. Obsessed by the detritus of cosmopolitan life, the waste products of the urban metabolism that are excreted and flushed away at the end of the day (or year or century) in the human colonies that we call cities, he has taken it upon himself to catalog them with the pedantry of a curator, and then to recycle them like a delirious environmentalist. What happens, he wants to know, to the documents that accumulate in city hall, to old heating pads that cease to function, to abandoned television antennas, to cans of food that have lost their labels, to antiquated exercise machines, to discarded radiators, to unused bus tickets, to the birth certificates filed away in the overflowing cabinets of hospitals, to the items that fall to sidewalks through holes in pockets, to the lipstick stains on castaway cigarette butts, to the crusts of unfinished sandwiches, to the objects left overnight in parked cars? And what about the less material remains of a city day, its twenty-four-hour accumulation of stomach aches, smells, sirens, human aggression, unbuilt bridges in the heads of engineers, different hairstyles fleetingly conjoined on the same streetcorner, physical discomfort caused by badly adjusted brassiere straps? Where do they go?

We know, of course, where they go: to city dumps, or to be swept up by the streetcleaner in the morning, or into an oblivion to which the vector of time cannot return. But not in Katchor's comics. Here everything trashed, misplaced, or perished has its user, its collector, its redeemer. As in a merciful theodicy, nothing is finally lost or gone to waste. This is a world in which radiator musicians meet for concerts performed on vintage, steam-driven instruments; in which a man spends his days with a two-way radio, mapping the migration of hairstyles throughout the city; in which a compendious Public Directory of the Alimentary Canal compiles daily listings of "the gastrointestinal condition of every person residing in the metropolitan area"; in which a door-to-door "hink eradicator" erases the writing on old documents so that their paper can be used again; in which public "salvage excursion" boats leave for New York Bay every Saturday at 4 a.m. and cemeteries are installed with seismographs to record the stirrings of the dead. (All they register, though, is sleepers falling out of bed in nearby neighborhoods.) It is not only in the mind of God that all is preserved. It is also in the parallel universe of Ben Katchor.

In *The Jew of New York*, Katchor has gone from the self-contained installments of *Julius Knipl* to a cartoon novella, a work of historical fiction set in New York in the year 1830. His book's characters do and do not resemble the bizarrely fixated types known to readers of the *Forward*. Similarly driven by singular preoccupations, they are no longer beachcombers of the past. They are visionaries of the future, each with some madcap dream, innovation, or scam to sell the world.

One of them, more the prime mover of *The Jew of New York* than an actor in it, is a real historical figure. He is Mordecai Manuel Noah (1786–1851), a Charleston-born journalist, politician, and diplomat who—after several years as an American consul in Tunis, where he met needy and exotic Jews far beyond the ken of the tiny American Jewish community of his day—decided to found a Jewish "city of refuge" called Ararat on 2,444 acres of land in upper New York State. In the presence of the Seneca chief Red Jacket, the city's cornerstone was laid on Grand Island, near Buffalo, in 1825. Yet Noah (who also believed that the American Indians were descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes) chose to return immediately afterwards to New York City, and Ararat, Jewish population zero, was sold eight years later to a lumber merchant named Lewis Allen.

Most of the fictional characters in Katchor's strange book are connected in one way or another to Noah's project. Largely Jewish, the cast includes Samson Gergel, a scenic director asked to design the set for a new play about Noah, also called "The Jew of New York"; Nathan Kishon, a *shochet* or ritual slaughterer who, after traveling to Buffalo in the vain hope of striking it rich as Ararat's first kosher butcher, has spent years in the wilds with a mad trapper named Moishe Ketzelbourd; Ketzelbourd himself, the hoarder of fabulous amounts of valuable beaver pelts and a theater buff with a crush on a British actress in Gergel's play; Isaac Azarael, a New York button merchant who finds Kishon sleeping under a blanket in a public park and mistakes him for a Jewish Indian; and the vaudeville impresario Hershel Goulbat, currently featuring a "real Jewish Indian" named Elim-Min-Nopee, taught by him to recite Hebrew prayers in front of audiences.

There is also Abel Marah, the salesman-inventor of an "artificial epidermis" or "silk fleshing in four natural colors, alabaster, ivory, peach, and gooseflesh" for use upon the stage; Francis Oriole, a businessman with a plan for carbonating Lake Erie and piping its seltzer water to New York City; Yosl Feinbroyt, a "latter-day kabbalist" and compiler of 130 distinct sounds made by the human digestive system that he is seeking to peddle to dictionary publishers; Vervel Kunzo, a representative of the *Verein Fuer Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* in Berlin, sent to America to draw up a report on "cultural manifestations unique to the Jews of New York City"; and still others. (The *Verein* was an important milestone in the modern "scientific" study of Jewish history, and it really did take an initial interest in Ararat: this is one of many details in Katchor's book based on fact.)

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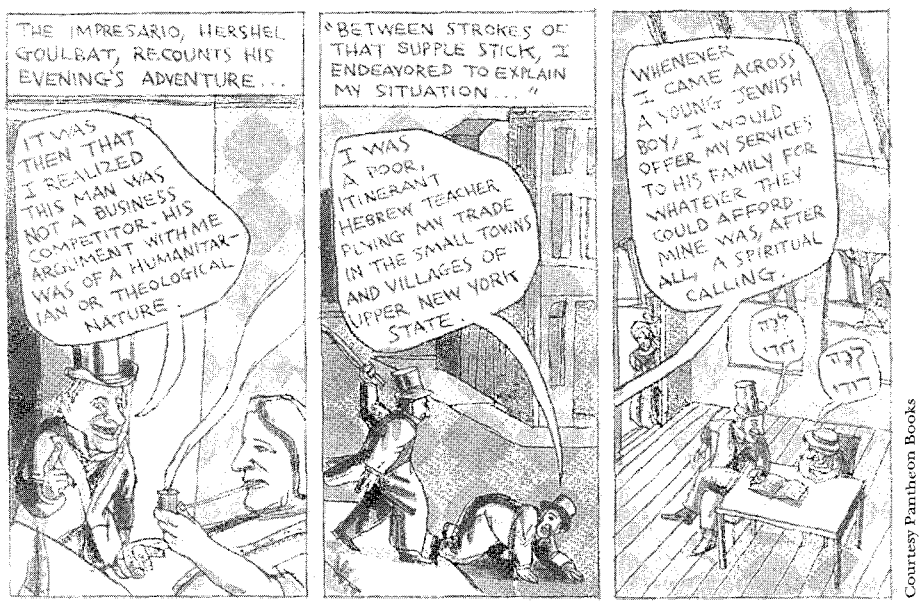
The skeins binding these men are all drawn tight by the time the book reaches its grand climax: a fire that consumes the New World Theater when a burner, designed to produce a smell of pickled herring with each stage entry of the Jew Noah, gets out of control and the firemen extinguishing the blaze with seltzer discover that this comes not, as fraudulently advertised, from the limitless basin of Lake Erie but from a quickly emptied barrel in a next-door basement. It is all delightfully daft.

Comics are supposed to be easy to read; this is a characteristic of the genre that is commonly cited for and against it. But *The Jew of New York* is not easy at all. Its crowded cartouches and its inky murks of black and gray can make one fear for one's eyesight. Most of its characters look carved from the same fallen log; they are difficult to distinguish, and they say things like: "When this continent is thoroughly oxygenated, there will be no need for permanent dwellings. The citizens of the United States will reassume the salutary wandering life of the ancient Hebrews." There are times when one has to re-read the same page for comprehension as often as if it were written by Henry James.

Needless to say, this is deliberate. Not only does Katchor, a highly bookish illustrator, not wish to be easily grasped, his drawings and his texts are meant to convey the sunlessly labyrinthine minds of men in the relentless grip of *idées fixes*. It is intrinsic to his comics that there are no women or children (let alone families) in them; no love or affection; nothing of the social world of everyday relationships and obligations. Loners, practically autists, his characters are the type of men who live in boarding houses and laboratories, wander the streets at night and sit at the ends of bar counters, and converse only with their own intellects, which have remained zanily original while growing hopelessly hermetic from a lack of human contact.

Katchor's figures are the spiritual kin of Swift's scientists of Laputa seeking to distill sunshine from cucumbers; and of the middle-aged bachelor Nikolai Kuzmitch in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, who, aghast to find his life ticking away in a rented room, invents a Time Bank where one could exchange large amounts of useless seconds for more practical denominations like hours and days. Unfortunately, Kuzmitch never implements his plan, for, beginning to feel the earth spin beneath him in its orbit and unable to comprehend why no one else does, he takes to bed with an incurable vertigo.

And yet Katchor's characters are made of sterner stuff. Just as the historical Mordecai Noah was simultaneously a prototype and an anticipatory parody of Theodor Herzl, so they are both the spiritual forerunners and the reduction to absurdity of the modern American entrepreneur. Carbonating Lake Erie may seem like the notion of a madman, but what is the difference in principle, one might ask, between it and such other nineteenth-century pipedreams as filling cities with steel-framed towers of Babel or producing millions of mechanical carriages that could outrun horses?


THE IMPRESARIO, HERSHEL GOULBAT, RECOUNTS HIS EVENING'S ADVENTURE...
IT WAS THEN THAT I REALIZED THIS MAN WAS NOT A BUSINESS COMPETITOR - HIS ARGUMENT WITH ME WAS OF A HUMANITARIAN OR THEOLOGICAL NATURE.
"BETWEEN STROKES OF THAT SUPPLE STICK, I ENDEAVORED TO EXPLAIN MY SITUATION..."
I WAS A POOR, ITINERANT HEBREW TEACHER PLYING MY TRADE IN THE SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF UPPER NEW YORK STATE.
WHENEVER I CAME ACROSS A YOUNG JEWISH BOY, I WOULD OFFER MY SERVICES TO HIS FAMILY FOR WHATEVER THEY COULD AFFORD. MINE WAS, AFTER ALL, A SPIRITUAL CALLING.

Courtesy Pantheon Books

FROM *THE JEW OF NEW YORK*

The difference, of course, is a big one, but it is not one of technological feasibility. Real lakes could have been turned into soda water had it been in anyone's financial interest to do so, just as it is possible (for the very reason posited by Swift's scientists: the presence of photosynthetically stored solar energy) to make light out of cucumbers. Economically, however, it is more sensible to make salads and kosher pickles.

Thus one could, if so inclined, read *The Jew of New York* as an illustrated parable of what happens to the male imagination when unchecked by practical—which may be the same as saying female—concerns. ("*Buffalo*? Do you think I'm going to take the kids and move to Buffalo just to live with a lot of Jews from Tunis?") On the level of literary grandeur, this imagination run wild leads to Captain Ahab chasing whales. On the level of comic farce, to Yosl Feinbroyt.

One could also, I suppose, take Katchor's book even more seriously by glossing over the distinction between its feverish fantasts and, say, Bill Gates. Linking every home in America by binomial computer is surely no less megalomaniacal a notion than hyperoxygenating America's air, and the virtual reality of Elim-Min-Nopee has grown into Disneyland and worse. Has Katchor written a Swiftian satire of the Faustian will to play God with the world that took its great historical leap forward in the nineteenth century and now has us all in its grip? (And if he has, why so many Jews? Chronic dreamers Jews may have been, but they are hardly important players in the industrial or post-industrial development of the planet.)

I suspect, though, that the truth may lie elsewhere. I suspect that Katchor has not set out to make a grand critique of anything. He creates the characters that he does because they are expressions of his soul. Like him, they are uninhibitedly eccentric minds with a compulsion to reimagine what the rest of us simply accept; like him, they are less attracted to people, whose human selves stubbornly resist the reformer's inspirations, than to the more cooperative plasticity of things.

This is why Katchor's drawings of things are more striking than his drawings of people. The illustrations that most come alive in his book are representations of New York's darkly mysterious streets, the silent boats on its rivers, its flaming theater surrounded by shadowy buildings: they are all palpably suffused with the presentiment that the physical world of the city has an inner life that calls out to us. Katchor's characters are attuned to its frequency. They hear what we do not.

HILLEL HALKIN is a writer and translator living in Israel, and a contributing editor of the *Forward*.

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One-Dimensional Man

By Jeffrey Herf

Technology, War and Fascism: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, Volume One edited by Douglas Kellner

(Routledge, 278 pp., $35)

It is impossible to think about the New Left of the 1960s without recalling Herbert Marcuse and the appearance of *One-Dimensional Man* in 1966. No other intellectual in the West so closely linked social theory to the new mix of cultural and political radicalism of the New Left. What Dylan was to the music, Marcuse was to the theory. To be sure, many activists had trouble making sense of his Germanic prose, rooted in the demanding traditions of Hegel, Freud, and Marx. His was a message of revolution in an era when the proletariat, the classical subject of revolution, had in his view become integrated into the capitalist system. It struck a deep chord in Berkeley, Madison, and Manhattan, in Paris, Berlin, and Tokyo. Yet the revolution did not take place. Instead it degenerated into dogmatism and violence. And then came postmodernism, and the confidence of Marcuse's Hegelian dialectic fell out of fashion, and capitalism survived one challenge after another.

In his introduction to this collection of Marcuse's essays of the 1940s—it is the first of a projected six volumes of Marcuse's essays and correspondence—Douglas Kellner asserts that these essays are characterized by a "continuing relevance" and an "enduring significance." They can still help, Kellner argues, "to develop ideas that can be used to grasp and transform existing social reality." But it is not for this specious claim that this book is interesting. It is valuable, rather, for documenting what the philosopher of revolution was thinking and writing when he was an official of the United States government, working as a staff member of the research and analysis division of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) from 1942 to 1945, and then in the State Department, where, from 1945 to 1951, he headed the Central European Bureau and was working on plans for postwar democratization in Germany.

Along with a remarkable group of German refugee intellectuals, most importantly the political scientist Franz Neumann, Marcuse devoted his talents to the American war effort against Nazi Germany. Now, for the first time, we are able to read Marcuse's analyses of Nazi Germany, as well as his views of communism and revolution in the period immediately following the war. These essays reinforce the point upon which scholars of the Frankfurt School have increasingly insisted, namely that the trauma of Nazism had an enduring significance for the Frankfurt School's analysis of modern society.

Marcuse was one of the most celebrated figures associated with the Frankfurt School, along with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. He was born in Berlin in 1898, into a well-to-do, assimilated Jewish family. As a young man he sympathized with the left wing of the German Social Democratic Party, but he resigned in 1919 following the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg. As H. Stuart Hughes noted, he remained a critic outside the SPD, in contrast to the political theorist Franz Neumann, who tried to change Social Democracy from within and who in the years of exile was to become Marcuse's closest friend, as well as his closest colleague in the Office of Strategic Services in Washington, D.C. during World War II.

Marcuse studied philosophy for three years at the University of Freiburg in the late 1920s. His teachers included Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, under whose guidance Marcuse wrote his first book, a study of Hegel's ontology. As Heidegger's Nazi sympathies became apparent, Marcuse distanced himself from his teacher, though his romantic-existentialist writings on being and authenticity, as well as his hostile views of modern technology, left an enduring mark on Marcuse's thinking. In 1933 he joined the Institut für Sozialforschung and worked in its Geneva office; and in the summer of 1934 he was among the first of the Institut's members to arrive at its new headquarters at Columbia University in New York.

After the war, in contrast to Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse refused to return to postwar Germany. And unlike them, Marcuse set out to connect critical theory to a political radicalism tinged with utopian and anti-authoritarian leftist themes. Horkheimer fought a holding action, seeking to preserve the vestiges of individual autonomy and rationality within a society facing what he called "the eclipse of reason." Adorno upheld a "negative dialectic" and a spirit of cultural and social criticism which contributed to the vitality of a post-war West German left-liberalism while eschewing any new visions of revolution. But Marcuse, faced with mass support for Nazism and fascism before 1945, and working class "bourgeoisification" and "integration" after World War II, persisted in searching for a new revolutionary subject.

Following the publication of *One-Dimensional Man,* his best-known work and probably the single most influential work of radical social theory of the 1960s, Marcuse concluded that he found his revolutionary subject in the New Left and the anti-imperialist revolts of the Third World. His Germanic English proved oddly quotable, and his talent as a phrasemaker was apparent in the extent to which the very chapter headings of the book entered into radical discourse: "the paralysis of criticism: society without opposition"; "new forms of control"; "the closing of the political universe"; "the conquest of unhappy consciousness: repressive desublimation"; "from negative to positive thinking: technological rationality and the logic of domination."

"Does not," he asked in the dialectical opening sentence of his book, "the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger?" Though the working class had ceased to be a revolutionary agent, radical theory had not been refuted.

> In the face of contradictory facts, the critical analysis continues to insist that the need for qualitative change is as pressing as ever before. Needed by whom? The answer continues to be the same: by the society as a whole, for every one of its members. The union of growing productivity and growing destruction; the brinksmanship of annihilation; the surrender of thought, hope and fear to the decisions of the powers that be; the preservation of misery in the face of unprecedented wealth constitute the most impartial indictment—even if they are not the *raison d'être* of this society but only its by-product: its sweeping rationality, which propels efficiency and growth, is itself irrational.

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In a decade routinely denounced for its anti-intellectualism, this demanding discourse brimming with dialectical confidence found a remarkable resonance in certain precincts of the New Left in America. Of course, Marcuse's loss of hope in the working class earned him critics, who accused him and the Frankfurt School of disguising upper-class disdain for the workers in the language of leftist radicalism. In the 1960s, at the height of his world-wide fame, the Maoist Progressive Labor Party went so far as to attack Marcuse as a "CIA agent" due to his involvement in the OSS during World War II. Should former members of PL read *Technology, War and Fascism*, they will learn that working for the American government did not blunt Marcuse's radicalism in the slightest.

Some of the essays published here, such as "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," contain arguments that will be familiar to readers of Marcuse's published books and essays. First published in 1941 in the Frankfurt School's journal *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, it contains the core of the argument that later appeared in *Eros and Civilization* and more extensively in *One-Dimensional Man*. Marcuse did not place himself in the Romantic, anti-technological traditions of European cultural pessimism. Instead, he combined a familiar criticism of the tendency of modern technology to erode individual autonomy with a view that under a socialist or communist organization of society this very same technology would usher in an era of flowering individuality and uniqueness, which would be owed to greater free time "beyond the realm of necessity" in which "the essential differences between men could unfold themselves; everyone could think and act by himself, speak his own language, have his own emotions and follow his own passions." This juxtaposition of a pessimistic description of threats to the individual and an optimistic assessment of the possibilities of ameliorating those threats if the current economic organization of society, that is, capitalism, could be overcome, would remain a constant of Marcuse's thinking.

Among the most important new material in this volume are Marcuse's previously unpublished analyses of Nazism from the 1940s. In "State and Individual Under National Socialism," from 1942, Marcuse described Nazism as "becoming the executive organ of the imperialist economic interests." Consistent with the Marxist aspects of his argument, he granted Nazi ideology scant autonomous causal significance. "The present rulers of Germany do not believe in ideologies and in the mysterious power of the race, but they will follow their leader as long as he remains what he has hitherto been, the living symbol of efficiency." This scanting of ideology was odd, given his interest in matters of culture. Yet Marcuse focused less on racial ideology than on technocracy, the abolition of the distinction between work and leisure and of protections of privacy.

His most interesting argument about Nazi culture was that it rested not on sexual repression but on the "abolition of highly sanctioned taboos," which "serves to intensify the 'integration' of individuals into the National Socialist system." Pointing to an end to discrimination against illegitimate mothers and children, and to the encouragement of extramarital relations between the sexes, and to a new cult of nudity in the arts and entertainment, Marcuse argued that the eradication of Western civilization's sexual taboos defending the family was leading to greater repression rather than greater liberty. Sexual release now served to reinforce the Nazi system:

> The relations between the sexes belonged to that realm of protected privacy that granted the individual a considerable degree of freedom from a society and a state incapable of fulfilling his innermost potentialities and desires. This privacy naturally became a haven for opposition and the image of a possible happiness. The National Socialist regime has set out to conquer this haven for the state.... The political utilization of sex has transformed it from a sphere of protective privacy in which a recalcitrant freedom could endure to a sphere of acquiescent license. The individuals whose most intimate enjoyment is urged and sanctioned by the state are apt to become its obedient followers.

Marcuse went on to link sexual release to Nazi racism. Those members of "the master race" who enjoyed the new sexual license were imbued with a feeling of superiority that made the various outsiders objects of contempt and oppression. "The individuals can be released only insofar as they are at the same time elevated above social groups which are intimately more fettered, helpless and unhappy than they are." The protest and the frustration generated in modern society are channeled into established pageants and mass demonstrations.

Later, in *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse would write of "repressive desublimation." He had in mind the commercial exploitation of sexual liberation. But it was in his analysis of Nazism that he first examined the links between ersatz sexual "freedom" and political domination. These are provocative ideas that deserve to be pursued further. Perhaps because the connection between Nazism and sexual repression seems so intuitively obvious, historians of German society and culture under the Nazis, who have examined such matters as the cult of the naked Aryan body and the links between racism and policies regarding reproduction, have not yet taken up these bold notions proposed by Marcuse.

In "The New German Mentality," written in June 1942 and circulated in the Office of War Information in 1942 and 1943, Marcuse distinguished between two aspects of the new mentality in Nazi Germany. One was pragmatic and matter-of-fact, and focused on efficiency, mechanization, and rationalization; the other kindled to myth, paganism, racism, and social naturalism. Matter-of-factness was "the very center of the National Socialist mentality and the psychological ferment of the National Socialist system" and constituted part of a "revolt against the basic principles of Christian civilization," namely, humanism, democracy, and Christian socialism. "The revolt against Christian civilization appears in various forms: anti-Semitism, terrorism, social Darwinism, anti-intellectualism, naturalism. Common to all of them is the rebellion against the restraining and

The first Christians effaced the historical Jesus, mythicizing him and doctoring his teachings through writing, selecting, editing, and finally canonizing a sacred literature; critical New Testament study confirms this. But now, maybe, the historical Jesus is recoverable by means of the *Thomas* document unearthed in 1945, which claims to be enigmatic sayings of Jesus jotted down by a disciple journeying with Jesus. This claim is validated by Jack Hannah in ***You Will Not Taste Death—Jesus and Epicureanism*** through fitting the sayings chronologically with the historical framework of Mark's Gospel. Hannah then analyzes all 113 sayings: showing them to be free of early Christian contrivances, developing a new historical narrative, and demonstrating that in fact Jesus was oriented toward Epicureanism—the most materialistic, scientific, and anti-superstitious of all Hellenistic philosophies. The historical Jesus had a more realistic ontology and ethic than what his successors devised. Hannah's findings challenge the academic presupposition that Jesus taught within the theistic and messianic bounds of Judaism. This seminal, radical, 321pp.pbk. is $12 postpd. Order from:

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transcendental principles of Christian morality (the liberty and equality of man qua man, the subordination of might to right, the idea of universal ethics)." Strangely, Marcuse included Luther's Protestantism within this catalog of the German rebellions against Christian civilization. But his discussion of the manifest anti-Christian elements of Nazism was not matched by a critical interrogation of some of the Christian roots of European anti-Semitism and then Nazi anti-Semitism.

Along with Adorno, Horkheimer, Ernst Bloch, and Walter Benjamin, Marcuse pointed to the simultaneity of technocracy and neo-paganism in Nazi Germany. It was one of Marcuse's and the Frankfurt School's singular contributions to grasp the coexistence of modern and anti-modern elements within European fascism. In the explosive mixture of technological modernization, political illiberalism, and religious fundamentalism around the world today, this theme retains, alas, its significance.

The thrust of Marcuse's comments, though, concerns Nazism as a distinctively German adaptation of society to the requirements of large-scale industry and imperialist conquest. He viewed Nazism as indicative of a particular phase in the development of capitalism, but he also reiterated familiar arguments about the peculiar German antagonism to the West owing to the relative weakness of liberalism and the persistence of authoritarian institutions and values. Germany's social organization and its historical tradition had led the bulk of German workers to accept the Nazi system.

In place of appeals to democracy, which the Germans associated with the failed Weimar Republic, Marcuse urged that Allied propaganda focus on the links between the Nazis and big business in order to weaken support for the regime within Germany. Still, despite these wartime recommendations for exploiting the potential divisions within German society, Marcuse's skepticism about the prospects for a leftward radicalization of the working class would remain an enduring feature of his thinking. Recent research by Richard Hamilton, Thomas Childers, and Jürgen Falter has furnished a more nuanced and complete picture of the extent of working-class support for Nazism, and underscored the depths of support in the lower-middle, middle, and upper classes. For Marcuse and the Frankfurt School theorists, however, the image of a working class in economic crisis moving to the right remained the most decisive memory, and it disabused him of optimism about the potential for working-class left-wing radicalism in postwar capitalist societies.

There is very little in these essays about the anti-Jewish policy of the Third Reich. In 1944, Franz Neumann had written in *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* that the Nazis would "never allow a complete extermination of the Jews" because they wished to keep them in readiness as a scapegoat for "the evils of the socio-economic system social control." Neumann's economicism had blinded him to the terrible reality. These essays do not indicate whether Marcuse shared Neumann's skepticism about Hitler's threats. Yet their general focus on the socio-economic dimensions of Nazism, as well as Marcuse's skepticism about the causal significance of Nazi racial ideology—both residues of their shared Marxist rationalism—suggest that this was the case. While both Neumann and Marcuse performed valuable service as analysts, judging from the essays in this volume as well as Neumann's published work, it is fair to say that neither used his official position in the OSS to focus on the specific issue of Nazi anti-Jewish persecution. The OSS certainly was a hotbed of "anti-fascism," but the evidence now at our disposal indicates that these German refugees did not focus analytical attention on the genocide of European Jewry that was then taking place.

Like so many of the left-leaning intellectuals who worked in Washington during the war, Marcuse's hopes for a radical leftist transformation in postwar West Germany were disappointed. An unpublished collection of "33 Theses" written in February 1947, when he was working at the State Department, makes clear the depth of his postwar radicalism. After the war, he wrote, "the world was divided into a neo-fascist and a Soviet camp. What still remains of democratic-liberal forms will be crushed between the two camps or absorbed by them." Western states "will become fascistized in the foreseeable future, while the others will enter the Soviet camp." Revolutionary theory must "ruthlessly and openly criticize both systems and uphold without compromise orthodox Marxist theory against both." Given the "integration of opposition" in the Western capitalist societies, the

> only possible way to successfully oppose the massive military-political apparatus of capital is to construct and implement an at least equally powerful military and political counter-apparatus, to which the traditional revolutionary strategy is subordinated. The Soviet Union will be seen as this kind of counter-apparatus. The common opposition against capital would be the basis for a future reunification of revolution and Sovietism—just as the current alliance of capitalism and Sovietism is the basis for the separation of revolution and Sovietism.

The post-1945 revival of European social democracy (which, in Marcuse's view, had facilitated fascism's rise to power in the 1920s and 1930s in Germany) signified the "economic and political integration of the working class into the system of capital" and was thus merely "a change in the structure of exploitation." The relatively successful integration of the working class meant that a new revolutionary subject had to be identified. And so the brunt of exploitation now fell on "the outsiders," the unorganized and unskilled migrants, and the colonized. Moreover, the fact that "the first successful socialist revolution [the Soviet Union] has not yet led to a freer and happier society has contributed immeasurably to reconciliation with capitalism and has objectively discredited the revolution." This has "allowed the existing society to appear in a new light, and the existing society has understood how to use this to its advantage."

Faced with the prospect of a fascist revival in the West with a working class integrated and bourgeoisified,

> the communist parties are and remain the only anti-fascist power. Their denunciation must be purely theoretical. It knows that the realization of theory is possible only through the communist parties and that it needs the help of the Soviet Union. This consciousness must be contained in all of its concepts. More: in all of its concepts the denunciation of neo-fascism and social democracy must outweigh that of communist politics. The bourgeois freedom of democracy is better than total regimentation, but it has been literally purchased with decades of prolonged exploitation and delayed socialist freedom.

Here Marcuse gave voice to an undiminished radicalism reminiscent of the German radical left of the 1920s and early 1930s, in which denunciation of Social Democracy—or "social fascism," as the Communists put it—prevented an alliance in the face of the shared Nazi foe.

In contrast to Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse drew Leninist conclusions from the pessimism of critical theory. Working-class integration in the era of "monopoly capitalism" thus

> has confirmed the correctness of the Leninist conception of the vanguard party

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as the subject of revolution. It is true that the communist parties of today are not this subject, but it is just as true that only they can become it. Only in the theory of the communist parties is the memory of the revolution alive, which can become the memory of the revolutionary goal once again; only its situation is so far outside the capitalist society that it can become a revolutionary situation again.

While Marcuse conceded that the task of reconstructing revolutionary theory within the Communist parties seemed impossible, he speculated wistfully that "perhaps relative independence from Soviet dictates, which this task demands, is present as a possibility in Western Europe's and West Germany's communist parties."

Marcuse's provisional belief in the potential of the Communist parties and his view of the Soviet Union as necessary for prospects of revolution in the West are more than intriguing footnotes to his intellectual biography. They also offer an important insight into the political movement that can be most accurately described as "Marcusian," that is, the New Left of the 1960s. Everywhere, the New Left imploded in less than a decade into a mixture of political withdrawal paralleled by the formation of a variety of Marxist-Leninist organizations. Everywhere the Marcusian moment of anti-authoritarian leftism gave way to the old-time religion. And so it is interesting to learn, from his unpublished "33 Theses" of 1947, that Marcuse had stressed that some variant of Leninism must indeed be the result of his version of critical theory. If the overwhelming majority of the members of a society cannot grasp their real interests, are blinded by false needs and led by organizations of the democratic left which serve the interests of the capitalist status quo, then a Communist party willing and able to act in opposition to existing mass consciousness would be a logical conclusion of such a radical pessimism. As the New Left in the 1960s, universally certain of the correctness of its political program, faced an apparently solid bloc of counter-revolution that appeared to enjoy the support of the people, there were precincts of the movement that drew the same conclusions which Herbert Marcuse had drawn from his own private reflections two decades earlier concerning "the correctness of the Leninist conception of the vanguard party as the subject of revolution."

Kellner's book concludes with an exchange of letters in August 1948 between Marcuse and Heidegger, his former philosophy professor in Freiburg. Marcuse comes off as admirably blunt and justifiably angry with Heidegger's apologetics and his repulsive efforts to equate postwar Soviet policy in East Germany with Nazi genocide. Following a devastating catalog of Heidegger's Nazi involvements and his postwar refusal to distance himself from them—these miscreancies are familiar now, but not then—Marcuse sharply told Heidegger that "we cannot make a separation between Heidegger the philosopher and Heidegger the man, for it contradicts your own philosophy."

The essays in this collection are important for historians of Nazi Germany, of American intellectual life in the 1940s, and of Herbert Marcuse's intellectual trajectory. Yet one reads them with a strangely antiquarian feeling. Contrary to Kellner's assertions, there is little here that can offer assistance in confronting our current political problems. Revolution as a desirable goal has long since lost any appeal for most Western leftists and all Western liberals. When Marcuse was writing these essays, the issue of whether or not capitalism ought to persist as the dominant form of economic organization was still a real one in Western Europe, and to some extent in the left wing of New Deal liberalism. But contrary to his own expectations and to those of many other observers, capitalism after 1945 did not succumb to the disasters of the interwar period. The central question of Western politics became the question of what kind of capitalist society and economy we should have. This remains its central question. But the abolition of capitalism? That is a fantasy of ideologues and nostalgists.

We are now in a post-euphoric era following the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Left-of-center governments are governing simultaneously in Germany, France, Italy, Britain, and the United States for the first time since the early 1960s. The collapse of the Communist governments certainly did not mean that the debate about the virtues and the vices of capitalism should cease. The case in favor of capitalism is stronger than it has ever been at the same time that it is undergoing its gravest global economic crisis since the 1930s. The classic perplexities of the Frankfurt School's first generation of critical theory—individual autonomy in mass society; the power of the media to dull sense and sensibility; the erosion of privacy; the perils and the promises of modern technology; the spread of market culture to all aspects of life; the links between individual psychology and mass politics; the disdain for the trashiness of mass culture and the refusal to accept that society and politics should be subject to the whims and the demands of private capital—remain important. Once they are separated from the dangerous and now fortunately discredited notions of revolution and the vanguardist contempt for the political opinions of the non-revolutionary Western working classes, ideas that were still a central aspect of Western intellectual life in the 1940s and then briefly revived in the 1960s, these aspects of the legacy of Marcuse and the Frankfurt School may continue to serve as a valuable provocation for American liberalism.

But they are not more that. They lack the enduring significance and the continuing relevance that Kellner professes to find in them. To the extent to which the Frankfurt School still speaks to our political perplexities, it speaks less in the utopian Marcuse than in the sober and chastened Horkheimer, whose postwar shift to liberalism did not endear him to the New Left. Like the old Dylan records on our shelves, the well-thumbed copies of *One-Dimensional Man* retain a talismanic and sentimental effect; but their intellectual effect is over. The political illusions of Herbert Marcuse should justly be consigned to the past. Historians of the intellectual mobilization against Nazi Germany must consult these essays, but political thinkers seeking to understand today's world should look elsewhere.

JEFFREY HERF is the author of *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Harvard University Press).

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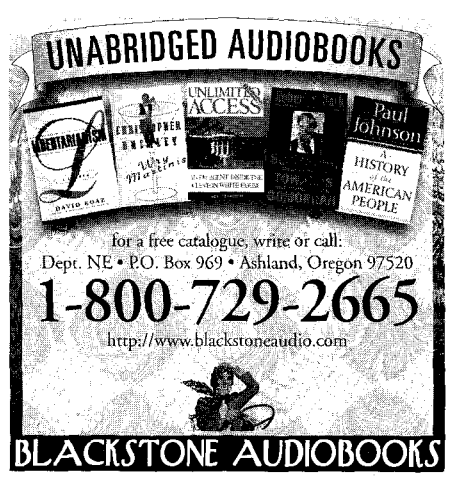

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

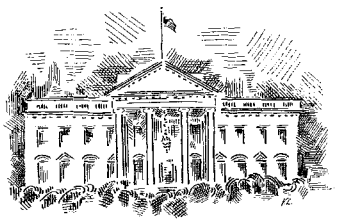
Godforsaken

LAST YEAR, I WROTE IN THIS SPACE that the problem of reconciling the evil and suffering in the world with the traditional notion of a powerful or merciful God is so difficult for me that I must reject this idea of God. This is not lightly said, I hope; the dilemma was the torment of my adolescent years, which were spent in a sternly Christian and evangelical environment. My youth was full of anxious ambitions of atheism. I used to write down all the reasons for God's existence on one side of the paper and all the arguments against on the other side.

AT THAT TIME, ATHEISTICAL thought was a secret delight, a garden of option in a desert of limit. I recall the savage pleasure I took when I first encountered David Hume's pert perplexity: "Is he [i.e., God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?"

I AM ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO CONsider the so-called free will defense of God, because it is the only really subtle and powerful explanation for how we can both live in a world full of pain and simultaneously be loved—or, at least, omnipotently watched—by a Creator. The free will defense argues that God had to give us freedom, which is necessarily the freedom to do evil as well as good. A world in which we were controlled, and forbidden from doing evil to each other, would be a place in which we could not do good to each other, either—a laboratory of automata, useless to humans, and presumably useless to God. But, as a teenager, even in broken and opaque forms, I sensed the radical inadequacy of this argument.

FIRST, HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT such a laboratory of automata would be useless for God's purposes? It is not for us to say what God's purposes are. Second, it is not clear that it would be worse to live in a laboratory of automata than in a world full of evil and pain. At the very least, we cannot *know* that it would be less desirable than our present existence, because we cannot know what that automatic and unfree life would be like. Third, and here I paraphrase the devastating argument of the French skeptic Pierre Bayle: Why would God bestow a gift (freedom) that he knows in advance will be abused by us in such a way that it will bring not only unhappiness but our downfall and damnation? Fourth, such an argument always assumes that, in the famous formulation, this world of freedom and pain is the best of all possible worlds. But God created both the world and the possibility itself. So He could have arranged things differently.



AN EARLY COPY OF *Letter to a Man in the Fire*, by the novelist Reynolds Price (to be published by Scribner this April), has been prompting such thoughts in the past few days. Price's book is addressed to a man named Jim Fox, a medical student who died last year. In 1997, Fox, who had developed cancer, wrote to Price, with a number of questions about suffering and God's care. He had read Price's memoir, in which the novelist recounted that he believed that he had been saved from his own cancer by "a caring, though enigmatic, God."

NECESSARILY SO, PRICE'S BOOK IS moving, and it is often wise and truthful about the mystery of suffering in a God-directed world. (Price believes in such a world, of course; he feels that he was healed of his cancer by Jesus, whom he saw in a vision.) Alas, the book descends into circularity and a certain benign simplicity. Price has a weakness for seeing *some* good in all the defenses of God. Thus Price seems to approve of the "consolation" that we can "only advance through suffering" and that out of suffering some good can be squeezed. He tells Fox that, if he survives, he will be "a far more valuable medical doctor and person" than he would otherwise have been. But this is a pagan argument, not a religious one. In a world without God, our only consolation is a kind of stoicism, in which we search for the fumes of good fortune that occasionally rise from the tar of pain. (Thus: I get cancer, I survive, and then I'm a better human being.)

BUT, IN A WORLD DIRECTED BY God, we precisely should *not* resort to this kind of consolation, because it simply defers the very question that prompted the consolation in the first place: How is my suffering compatible with a divine order? This stoicism makes God a sadist, because it is not clear why God has ordained that we should suffer now only to taste happiness at a later date, whether later in life, or in heaven.

BUT THEN PRICE BELIEVES IN heaven, and in Christ's resurrection, and he combines pagan stoicism with Christian optimism in his most emphatic formulation of the book. He advises Fox to think of God as the originator of all things, both "creative and destructive," adding that even the destructive things are ultimately good, "whatever our immediate evaluation," and good because "it is the will of that Father and in some way fulfills the intent of his ongoing care...." Price counsels us neither to protest nor complain but to take solace in the perception that "our lives are in God's hands and are the object of his conscious will, however terrible in the short run."

NOTE THAT PHRASE "IN THE short run"; here, the idea of heaven has inserted itself. We may suffer, but ultimately this life is just an antechamber to the greater happiness. And notice, also, the syllogistic reasoning: everything comes from God, including the bad things; but the bad things are good things because they come from God; therefore God cares for us, whatever he does to us. Yet this is to assume, as a premise, God's existence, which is the very premise that doubts about suffering and evil are supposed to address themselves to. It is *because* bad things come from God that I cannot believe in His goodness.

WHEN I CONSIDERED THESE MATters last year, several correspondents wrote to me to agree that this problem is an intolerable mystery but to express surprise that I leap from the stubbornness of the problem to the decision that God cannot exist. Yet it is precisely this dilemma, of all, that should prompt such blasphemy. One can either, like Price, confess the intolerable mystery, and then assert by circular, if anguished, thought that we must continue to worship the God that maintains and promotes this black mystery. Or one can come to the more rational conclusion that this mystery is not soluble because one part of the calculation, God, does not belong there. What better reason, what hotter crux, is there for letting God go?

JAMES WOOD

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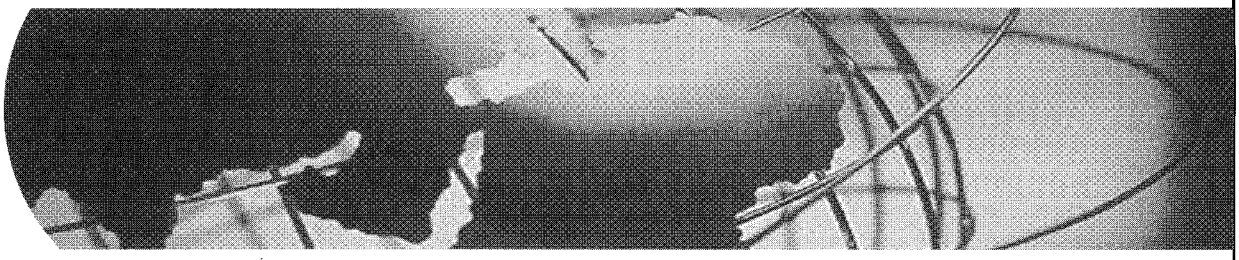

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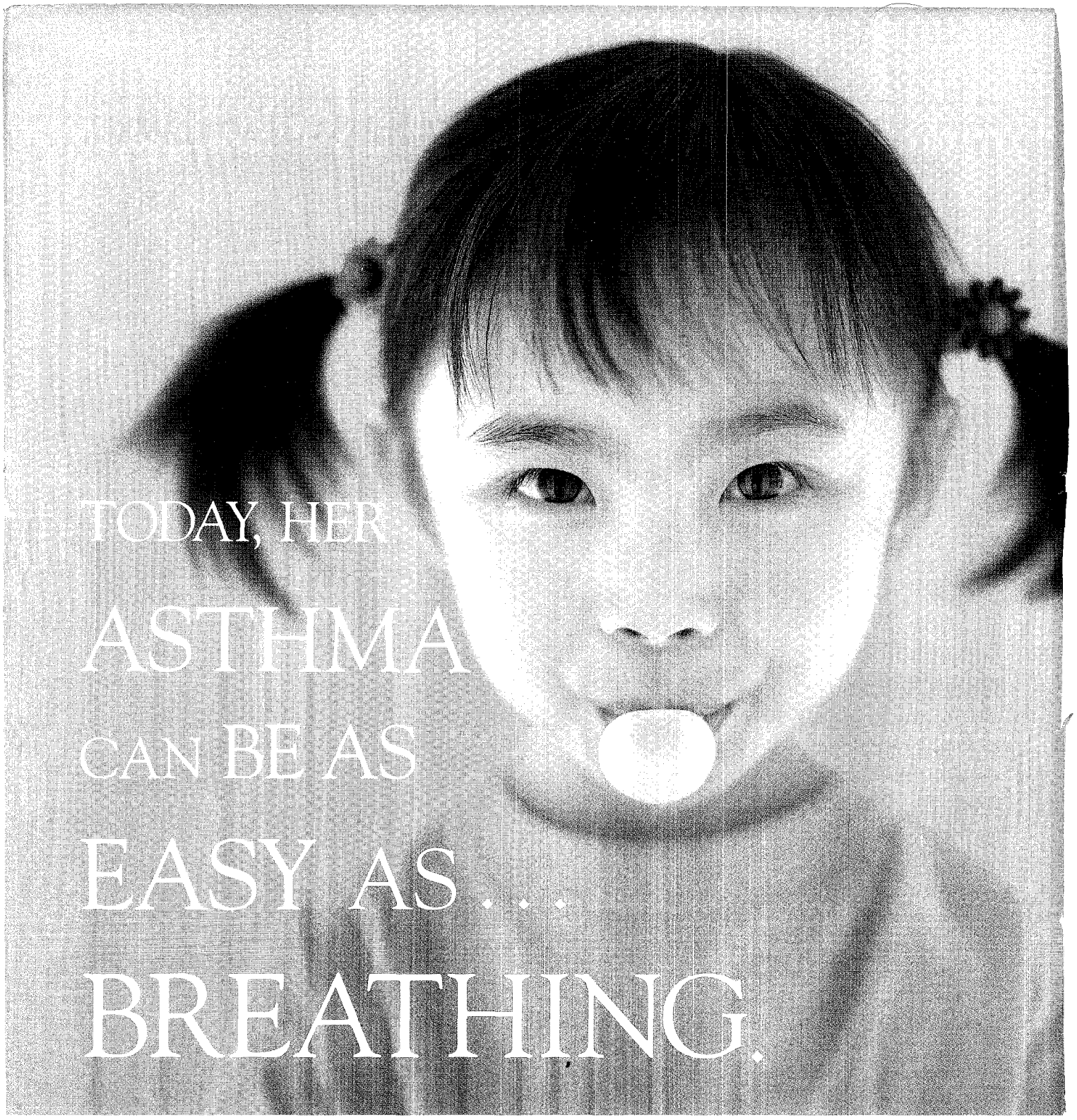

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